

by the same authors:
under the pen name of George Barret

FAR AWAY FROM HOME
Second Edition

FORTY-THREE YEARS, JAYANT AND TARA

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M. MULLA

THE EVOLUTION
OF
FRENCH DEMOCRACY

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TO THE HEROES OF THE RESISTANCE
AND
THE MEN AND WOMEN ALL OVER THE WORLD
WHO HAVE PROVED WITH THEIR LIVES
THAT FREEDOM IS INDIVISIBLE

IF in this book the words bourgeois and bourgeoisie occur again and again, it is because modern democracy, the product of three hundred years of fierce wars and revolutionary struggles, is the creation of middle class industry and middle class intellectuals.

Since the 18th century the machinery of the State has been in the hands of these men in the democratic countries of Europe,—and democracy has almost entirely been a matter of votes, the franchise and seats in Parliament—, though even before the Revolution of 1789 which represented its greatest triumph, this class had played a very important rôle in French history and slowly but surely consolidated its power, mostly under royal protection.

It is only in our day that disinterested students have understood the inadequacy of mere political rights, and learnt to insist that in a genuinely democratic state the social liberty of the subjects is as important, if not more important than the Parliamentary paraphernalia which have invariably been appropriated by the privileged minorities.

Everywhere the people are coming into their own, though their emancipation from the age-old tyrannies is not yet complete. But this does not mean that they have passively allowed themselves to be bullied for all these years. In France at least, during the period under consideration, the peasants and workers have on several occasions expressed themselves with unmistakable vehemence, although the numerous handicaps from which they suffered often made it impossible for them to distinguish between their friends and enemies, and always prevented them from uniting to get what they wanted from the governing classes.

These classes have not always been the same. The feudal nobility, the monarchy, the Church, the bourgeoisie—all these have struggled for authority and obtained it. Its members have fought each other, killed each other, and thanks to their

superior knowledge and education, have known how to sink their quarrels and present a united front in the face of a common danger. The pages of French history are filled with a bewildering account of their disputes and alliances, but through everything—wars, famines, revolutions—there runs like a thread of pure gold the record of the common people of France who have never accepted defeat at the hands of foreign invaders, and who have repeatedly and courageously rebuilt their devastated country after every political upheaval.

Friends and enemies have been astonished at the resistance movement which spontaneously grew up in the country during the German occupation; astonished too at the manner in which France has recovered from each one of the many disasters which have overtaken her through the centuries. Let these people read through any history of that nation, and their astonishment will disappear long before they have finished.

The famous words of Vercingétorix: "I have taken up arms for the liberty of all," have given rise to the illusion that this noble patriot who worked for a Celtic federation against the tyranny of Rome, was the first great Frenchman to stand up for democracy. But Vercingétorix, the son of a king, had his own conception of liberty, a conception which fitted in with the needs of a society based on slavery, like the democratic system of ancient Greece.

He was defeated by the Romans who, in their turn, were overwhelmed by the Barbarians amongst whom slavery was not so widespread. The one time conquerors of the world were then obliged in sheer self-defence to liberate hundreds of slaves who had no idea what to do with their newly acquired and nominal freedom. The free soldiers continued to elect their king, but the Barbarians were now conquering so much territory, that this "so called popular assembly" was soon reduced to the level of the prince's military escort."

Moreover, the country was so rent by war, that people were much more interested in security than in liberty. The peasant tilling his soil wanted a master who could keep the peace, and the latter quickly learnt how to take advantage of this situation. When a man died, his land was divided between all his sons; this vicious system added considerably to

the prevailing confusion, and murder became an almost daily affair. In the words of André Ribard: "Never was the State so entirely in the hands of a few families," and as the King's authority became more and more enfeebled, the people began to be more interested in pleasing the Mayors of the palace whose power was not affected by the struggles and rivalries of the royal family.

These mayors were originally slaves. Later on they became intendants and acquired a great deal of power, so that we may perhaps maintain that France did know a democracy of a sort in the time of the Merovingians.

When Gerbert, musician and Pope, conceived the idea of the Crusades, partly out of religious fervour, partly to rid the Church of the turbulent feudal barons, he certainly did not imagine that he was helping to open a new era in human history, and one which would lay the seeds of democracy in France.

In his *Histoire Sincère de la Nation Française*, Charles Seignobos points out that the first consequence of this quasi religious quasi political movement was to bring together the different European rulers, who were defending a common cause for the first time in the history of the Continent. Moreover, it was not enough for the knights to declare their willingness to fight for the Holy Tomb. They had to be armed and equipped, and those who returned, dazzled by visions of Oriental splendour, became much more fastidious about their clothes and surroundings, thanks to their contact with the heathen East. More and more they needed the skilled artisans to provide them with their needs as well as with their luxuries, and as a result of the seigneurial demands, these men who a century ago had been as miserably poor as the peasants began to prosper and to acquire wealth.

Soon the artisans in the towns began to get together in Corporations, in order to defend themselves against the rapacious nobles who did not hesitate to hang a creditor if he showed too great an anxiety to recover his money. But more than a hundred years had to elapse before these Corporations assumed a political character, and it was not till the 12th century that they succeeded in obtaining recognition for their charters. They were formed only with the idea of safeguarding the commercial position of their members, yet they may

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be looked upon as the first beginnings of that self-conscious bourgeoisie which was to play such an important rôle in the political development of the country, right up to our times.

They owed their increasing importance to the king, who being poorer than most of the barons badly needed the money of the Corporations, and who was therefore obliged to give communal charters to about three hundred bourgs on his return from the Crusades. In spite of the royal distaste for these upstart artisans, the monarchy ended up by forming an alliance with them against the nobles, and we know that Louis VII had such an alliance in mind. This period is noted for the splendour of the feudal chevaliers, but also for the passing of ordinances which benefited the Communes. Paris had its *enceinte fortifiée*, the Louvre was built, the University of Paris was formed in 1200, and Notre Dame was on the point of being completed.

The administrative reforms of Saint Louis were carried out mostly in agreement with the Corporations, who were already using their newly acquired power to suppress the poor. The King liberated a number of serfs, eliminated certain feudal justices, reformed the Prevostship of Paris, and asked Étienne Boileau to draw up a code of the rules and privileges of the Corporations, the result of his labours being the famous *Livre des Métiers* which proves that the cleavage between the masters and the workers was already very great.

Saint Louis also organised the administration of justice, and most important of all, delegated his power to a Parliament. He elected a few barons to undertake the formation of this Parliament which they did in the King's name, its authority extending all over the country. The rising bourgeoisie was now sure of royal support in its fight against the workers.

Its power was greatly enhanced by the successive defeats of the feudal barons fighting against the organised bourgeoisie of other countries. Already, after the battle of Courtrai (1302) in which the Flemish bourgeois had routed the French nobility, there were protests against the imposition by the King of a tax known as the *maltôte*. Things became worse when the insolent and inefficient barons were again defeated by the English archers at Crecy, and in return for the money they gave Jean le Bon to carry on the war, the Corporations

demanded and received the "first legislative measures on salaried work."

When France, or rather French feudalism, suffered a third defeat at Poitiers, matters came to a head. The people of Paris were furious, and the popularity of the Prevost Etienne Marcel was very great, because he called for a control of the money given to the King in the form of a *Conseil de Surveillance* composed of twenty-eight deputies, of which twelve were to be drawn from the bourgeoisie. The alliance between the latter and the monarchy was severely strained as a result of these foreign defeats, and the bourgeois found an unexpected ally in the people who imagined that their wealthy employers would uphold their cause in the struggle against the King.

They wore the red and blue badge of the Prevost, and his suggestions were discussed by everybody. He insisted that the nobles should no longer be exempted from taxation, that they should be deprived of their right to requisition the property of others, that horses and fodder should be made secure from their banditry, and that in return for these measures the cities should furnish one armed soldier for every hundred families. These demands culminated in the *Grande Ordonnance* which the Regent signed in 1357, firmly intending to break all its provisions at the earliest possible opportunity.

Two important features of this period should be noted. Firstly, the fact that like the peasants the bourgeois had never accepted defeat at the hands of the invaders. They had not hesitated to burn their property in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. Thanks to their patriotism, only a few coastal cities remained in the hands of the English in 1380, and their contribution to the national cause was so great that the King granted the middle classes a number of privileges to reward them for their services.

The second point to be noted is the rôle played by the people of Paris in public events. They expressed their opinion with great energy, took the law into their hands, liberated people imprisoned for debt and released Hugues Aubert from the *Fort Evêque*. They thought that this bourgeois who had designed the Bastille was the right leader to guide them in their insurrection against the throne; but he escaped their vigilance, not because he was a coward but because between

the two forces—the throne and the people—he preferred the throne. The cleavage between the rich and the poor, between employers and employees, was now too great to be mistaken.

It seemed that the monarchy had been defeated in this long drawn out struggle, but such was not the case. The bourgeoisie which was now able to produce a leader like Etienne Marcel was not yet a homogeneous unit, capable of following up a victory by presenting a united front. This conflict helped the nobles who were more conscious of their class than of their nationality, and in the long series of confused disputes, betrayals, intrigues and fresh clashes between the Parliament and the throne, one thing alone becomes clear: the bourgeois had suffered a heavy set-back of which the result would be years of submission. There was wholesale repression. Nicolas and Desmarets, bourgeois leaders, were beheaded, and the court martials were busy for three whole weeks. In order to exercise a more effective control over the Corporations, the King modified their internal structure. The jurors instead of being elected by the masters were now appointed by the Prevost who increasingly became an agent of the throne. All talk of liberty was at an end for the moment.

The ideals of this class round about 1392 may be easily summed up. It cared little for political power, but was most particular about safeguarding the municipal rights which enabled it to carry on its business, so that in spite of the quarrels with the King the promises of Jean Sans Peur induced the Universities of Paris, the Sorbonne, and certain merchants to rally round him. When the King felt himself strong enough he murdered his enemy the Duc d'Orleans, and in the fresh conflicts which arose, one fact alone is of interest, viz. the siege of the Bastille by the Parisians in 1413. History is being anticipated.

In 1415, the defeat of Agincourt decided the fate of the French feudal nobility. As André Ribard says: "It was the end of a régime." The system which was meant to secure the peace had miserably failed to justify its existence, and the very land which constituted the wealth of the nobles was so devastated by the enemy that they could no longer get anything out of it. The King now became the symbol of peace and national unity, so much so that in spite of their conflicting interests the different classes forgot their quarrels and rallied round him.

Thus Joan of Arc, a peasant girl, felt she could not really accomplish her mission if the King was not officially crowned, and she was supported by the bourgeoisie, particularly that of Orleans who lodged and pensioned her mother. The monarchy had become a progressive force for the time being; the King as well as the middle classes were anxious to form a new alliance and thanks to Joan, the latter were able to strengthen their position in Normandy by obtaining new privileges from Charles VII in 1438.

The country was so devastated that the barons were obliged to make important concessions to the peasants who proved once again "the unbelievable vitality of the French people." One good thing which emerged out of all this misery was the sentiment of individual liberty, arising out of the common distress.

The crumbling of the feudal system and the new friendship between the King and the middle class business men had two important results: the French Church began to shake off the tyranny of Rome, and to the great joy of the bourgeois, the Pope got a much smaller share of their money than before. Secondly, the King formed companies and provided them with the artillery and the archers received from the cities, and this was the beginning of the regular army, the existence of which was to play such an important role in the political development of France.* This army proved to be of great value to Louis XI in his quarrels with the barons. It seems certain that he would not have been able to defeat the house of Burgundy without the help of the bourgeois who were sick and tired of war, and wanted the stable administration which the throne alone was in a position to provide. For their help these men were exempted from paying certain taxes, and the money so lost was recovered by other means, the most important of which was the creation of honorary titles in the Corporations.

By obtaining such a title a member could buy a mastership,

* In one of his delightful essays on the English, André Maurois points out that the personal bodyguard of Queen Elizabeth, considered to be one of the most autocratic of English rulers, did not consist of more than two hundred men. The rank and file of the army with which Charles I fought the Parliament was made up almost entirely of mercenaries whose pay was always in arrears. No English sovereign could, therefore, be a despot in the Continental sense of the term.

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and become a master without ever having proved his worth as a worker. Nor was he bound by the rules of the Corporations, so that these bodies had now made a clean break from their feudal origins. The cleavage between the manufacturer and the worker was now so great that the Gobelin brothers belonging to Rheims left that town to settle in Paris, while another sign of the changing times was the meeting of the *Etats Généraux* of 1438 at Tours instead of at Paris, where the people were known to have "dangerous traditions."

The discovery of America with all its consequences immeasurably increased the power of the merchants. So great was the peace and prosperity of this period that even the harassed peasants found a measure of security, and the barons who wanted to take the law into their hands found themselves up against the King's justice. Many of them were so hopelessly impoverished that they were obliged to liberate their serfs *en masse*, and the peasants who began to be conscious of their individuality could have won a genuine freedom, had it not been for the hostility of the *nouveaux-riches* who had bought immense estates from the ruined aristocrats.

In 1516 the concordat between the Church and the Throne roused the violent opposition of the bourgeoisie, but the King did not give way for the monarchy was rapidly becoming absolute. In spite of their anger however the disgruntled subjects did not dream of pushing matters to an extreme, having learnt by bitter experience to prefer a stable monarchy to any other form of government.

And clashes notwithstanding, they continued to prosper under royal protection. Commerce spread in the reign of Francis I; the Banks emerged as a national force, and when as a result of military defeat Francis ceded Burgundy to Spain, the *Etats* of the province formally forbade the monarch to dispose of subjects who wished to "remain loyal to the Crown of France."

This decision was confirmed in 1527, and apart from proving the growing importance of the bourgeoisie it saved the national unity, as Provence also refused to side with the Connétable de Bourbon who was in league with the enemy.

50 A. D.—1527

THE REFORMATION, THE ENCYCLOPÆDISTS

II

THE REFORMATION, THE ENCYCLOPÆDISTS

IN its early phase the Reformation was a progressive force, and by attacking the age old authority of the Roman Church, it helped to liberate the minds of men from the bondage of mischievous and outmoded dogmas. Lutheran ideas came to France by way of Lyons, a great printing and commercial centre, and they were welcomed by the bourgeois who now began to talk of liberty, hating as they did the Church of Rome with its incessant financial demands. The activities of these men who were now rich and powerful enough to develop intellectual ambitions, were encouraged by the liberal attitude of Francis I who stopped the trial which the theologians wanted to hold against Jacques Lefèvre, the first French translator of the Bible. He also released Berquin, the translator of the works of Erasmus; protected Etienne Dolet, heretical pamphleteer and proof-reader of Lyons, and personally invited Luther's friend Mélancthon to France. And finally, he accepted the advice of Guillaume Budé, the greatest Hellenist of the time, and was willing to put Erasmus in charge of the *Collège de France*.

Everywhere the word liberty was pronounced; even the workers of Lyons and Meaux looked upon the Reformation as a liberating force, and ignoring the economic implications of the liberty which the middle class humanists valued so much, made the mistake of believing that the two liberties—their own and that of their masters—would not be mutually antagonistic. The advent of Protestantism brought about a temporary alliance between Capital and Labour, but the monarchy had understood the position from the beginning, and a little later the King allowed Berquin and Dolet to be murdered. The Catholics began to persecute the Huguenots, and this was the beginning of the Religious Wars, one of the bloodiest and fiercest in French history.

Fanaticism—religious or political—is tiring, and there is only one thing to interest us during this period when the Calvinist bourgeois and the Catholic Leaguers were waging a war to the death.

The Catholic League of which the Duc de Guise was the moving spirit, bore a remarkable resemblance to the Fascist organisations of our time. Its members were the worst reactionaries of the period, and it advocated the doctrine of blind obedience to the Leader. Also, like Fascism, it professed to champion the cause of the people it was out to suppress, talked of a Republic, and the Duc de Guise who paraded before the French as the saviour of the country was applauded by the people who detested their Calvinist employers.

The King tried to play off one side against the other; as usual the people suffered most of all, and with them the cause of democracy which could not possibly thrive in such a fanatical atmosphere.

When Henry of Navarre succeeded in having the troublesome de Guise murdered, his followers had already taken advantage of popular support to establish a terroristic regime in Paris. The war was over, but it took the King three years to drive out the Spaniards who had entered France on the invitation of the League. Once again the need of a strong stable monarchy became evident, and once again the country was saved by its marvellous peasants who bravely undertook to rebuild their ruined country.

The Edict of Nantes promulgated by Henry of Navarre was a great step forward in the cause of liberty, since it accepted the principle of religious freedom. With the re-establishment of peace, the bourgeoisie once again became powerful. This was the age of industrial progress, and not content with a negative revolt against established authority, the middle class intellectuals developed a taste for scientific experiments, particularly in the field of anatomy and glass work. The century was full of promise for the future, when after ten years of peace, Henry once again began to dream of war which was soon to become the "destiny of the monarchy."

We now come to the period known as that of absolute monarchy, because the *Etats Généraux* were not convoked from 1614 to 1789. But the Royal power was chiefly concerned with increasing the personal glory of the sovereign, the real power behind the throne being the prelates and the nobles who never failed to present a united front in the face of a common danger.

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The rich bourgeois bought over the rights of the impoverished nobles, and constituted a new nobility. This Parliamentary caste was protected by its wealth in a way beyond the reach of the genuine but ruined aristocracy, and turned out to be the implacable enemy of village communal rights. Formerly the kings of France used to select their counsellors from families close to their own to represent them in religious, financial and judicial matters. The Parliaments of the 17th century kept these characteristics, i.e. they registered the royal acts, accorded taxes and loans to the King and promulgated laws, but the top heavy charges helped to make the seats hereditary. Far from desiring the overthrow of the King, this new aristocracy was all for supporting him, provided he accepted the doctrine that those who represented him in Parliament were above the law. It was a reactionary body opposed both to intellectual and political progress, so that Descartes with his rational mind and mathematical genius considered it wise to have his work printed in Holland; but by continually discussing public affairs and by trying to hold their own against the King, these men were sometimes obliged to play the rôle of enlightened Republicans, and the ideas they let loose were to bear fruit in the next century.

The last *Etats Généraux* of 1614 were particularly interested in the *paulette*—the right of transmitting seats in Parliament. Other reforms which came up for discussion were a demand by the *Tiers Etat* to reform the Church and limit the fiscal rights of Rome, also the complaints of the Corporations which resented the evasions of its rules by the big business of the time.

The reign of Louis XV, that is the period immediately preceding the Revolution, is dominated by intellectual and literary giants who so contributed to the liberation of the human mind and spirit, that for the student of democracy their work almost overshadows the purely political life of the country.

This was the period when admiration for England and English institutions was almost universal, and the English language was *tout à fait à la mode*. This admiration was not however confined to fashionable society. Montesquieu after spending eighteen months in England, acquired a "permanent respect for the English character and polity;" so did Voltaire

who, during the three years of his stay in the country, learnt to appreciate British manners and the British spirit of tolerance.

His brilliant satires as well as his indefatigable efforts on behalf of the victims of tyranny and injustice, were an outstanding factor in the development of the period. The vogue enjoyed by Rousseau, republican and sentimental deist, attracted public attention to his revolutionary views on the education of the young (*Emile*), to his revolt against social tyranny (*La Nouvelle Heloise*), and to his absolutely novel theories on the constitution of human society as expounded in *Le Contrat Social*. "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Misleading as they are, what an inspiration these words must have provided to the hundreds of human beings who were struggling so desperately to break away from the age-old slaveries!

The contribution of Montesquieu with his *Lettres Persanes*, his *Esprit des Lois* and his *De la Grandeur et de la Décadence des Romains* was also very valuable, though the greatest and most tragic personality of the century was, in our opinion, Denis Diderot.

Lack of space does not permit us to dwell on his famous *Lettre Sur les aveugles* (1749), followed by the *Lettre Sur les Sourds et muets*—these essays being a fine illustration of the "comprehensive freedom with which he felt his way round the subject."

His most important and monumental work is, however, the *Encyclopédie* which let loose a storm of hate and anger difficult for us to understand, since there are no openly atheistic statements in the essays and no direct denunciation of ecclesiastical corruption. But the author or authors look upon religious tolerance and speculative freedom as things to be taken for granted, and advocate a new and heinously unorthodox doctrine—that the welfare of the ordinary people of the country should be the primary concern of any government.

It is also an unstinted eulogy of "scientific knowledge and pacific industry," both of which ideas were repugnant to the governing classes. The *Encyclopédie* was therefore formally suppressed in 1759 but it continued to appear, clandestinely of course. The unbelievable difficulty with which the labour was completed after twenty years, (though a terrified publisher irretrievably mutilated the work by suppressing what he con-

ered to be dangerous passages), the poverty and persecution which Diderot had to endure, besides proving the fine intellectual integrity of the man, were also a sign of the times. It now became apparent that no amount of official disapproval could arrest the progress of these new and intoxicating ideas. France was on the threshold of her great Revolution.

THE REVOLUTION

A great deal of the misunderstanding and confusion to which the first and greatest of the French Revolutions has given rise may be avoided, if we bear in mind the fact that in the all-important and indispensable part played in it by the masses, it was essentially and above all other things the revolution of the bourgeoisie.

The Parisians—people and bourgeois—may have stormed the Bastille and so given France her national festival, but the whole class which acquired power by overthrowing the *ancien régime* had no intention of sharing that power with anybody. "Who vanquished the king?" asks André Ribard. "The bourgeoisie. Who intends to enjoy the fruits of that victory? The bourgeoisie. This is the whole story of the Revolution." One has only to read Article 2 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*¹, to realize how sacrosanct private property was in the eyes of the newly installed authorities.

This is no attempt to belittle the significance of this epoch-making upheaval which, after a century and a half, remains one of the outstanding events in human history. The Revolution was responsible for many crimes and follies, but it let loose a flood of new ideas which have not yet lost their vitality. The period of bourgeois supremacy was indispensable, and the intellectuals of that class have played a rôle in the development of European civilization, the importance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Only, a proper understanding of the economic implications of the Revolution is necessary, for these have often been lost sight of in the hectic progress of the purely political aspect.

¹"The object of every political association is to uphold the natural and inalienable rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security and the right to resistance to oppression."

Many of the outstanding figures of this epoch were proud of their relations with the King. As each social unit saw its pet grievances being removed, it strove to terminate the Revolution, the enthusiastic revolutionaries of the 4th August becoming counter-revolutionaries, the minute they discovered they could no longer make history fit in with their personal needs and wishes.

This fundamental antagonism became apparent in the incessant conflict between the orthodox bourgeois revolutionaries and Marat—, who insisted that the public should be admitted to the deliberations of the Assembly, a conflict which culminated in the murder of the latter by a bourgeois girl.

In his *Ami du Peuple* he constantly upholds the cause of the people: "the workers who constitute the healthiest and most useful section of our population, and without whom society could not exist for a single day", and in the same paper he denounces Le Chapelier, a lawyer of Rennes, who in the name of the *Declaration of Rights* proposed a law, the object of which was to "prevent the formation of labour coalitions which would demand an increase in the daily wages of the workers."

This law which was unanimously passed by the Assembly, remained in force for nearly a century, and so turned out to be one of the most durable of the many measures passed by the governing class of the period.

It was in the midst of these discussions that the King was brought to Paris as a prisoner and accepted the Constitution of 1791, which became the model for future constitutions of the bourgeois state. It divided the French people into active and passive citizens, upon which Camille Desmoulins exclaimed: "You have made Jesus a passive citizen. In your Constitution he would not be an active citizen, nor would he have the right to vote."

In the Assembly elected by this Constitution, the Girondin deputies tried to calm the popular wrath, without touching any of their own privileges. The action of the *émigrés* who had organized an army and were openly talking of re-establishing the King with all his old powers came to them as a godsend, since it helped to divert public anger into a ne

channel. War was declared on the 20th April 1792, and nobody could say whether it would "liberate the court or save the bourgeoisie." The people invaded the Tuileries, and in the face of this new danger political thought found once again the force it seemed to have lost since 1789.

The Girondins had been saved for the moment by raising the cry *la patrie en danger*, and an astonished world witnessed the wave of exalted patriotism which swept over the country.*

The First Republic was founded on the 10th August 1792 when the distinction between active and passive citizens was abolished. When France was invaded, Marat who had understood the significance of the class war from the beginning, was put in charge of the National Press and became a popular hero. The Jacobins became more and more powerful. Marat and Robespierre were the undisputed leaders of the Revolution, and the people seemed to have triumphed completely when the Convention passed the Decree of the 17th July 1793 abolishing the "indemnity of old feudal rights", just three days after the former was murdered.

The Revolution having achieved its object could have terminated at this point, but the Convention did not dare to touch the speculators and profiteers, in spite of popular hunger and distress. It was at this point that an obscure deputy suggested a Reign of Terror to replace the bread which was always lacking, and when in October the Convention renewed the prohibition against the workers, it became evident that the Jacobins were treading in the footsteps of their predecessors.

Marat's ideas were carried on by Saint Just who has been mistaken for a Socialist, whereas his ambition like that of Robespierre was to create a republic of the *petite bourgeoisie*. He hated the rich, but was equally afraid of the aggressive proletariat. His conception of revolutionary action was translated into texts by the Convention, and although by the decree of Ventôse the property of suspects was divided between the poor, these were half measures which did not affect the development of the Revolution in any fundamental manner.

* Goethe, who was present at the Battle of Valmy, saw in it the beginning of a new era.

In their struggle against the King and the Church, the bourgeois had received the help of the people. In their struggle against the bourgeois the people were alone, and as a matter of fact they did not still have a clear idea who the real enemy was, being duped by talk of the wicked priests and aristocrats who were plotting against France with the help of foreign powers.

When the Revolution no longer needed the Terror, it turned the Terror against the terrorists themselves, and with Robespierre perished the last of the Jacobin heroes. The Revolution could go no further within the limits of the bourgeois state. The class which had captured power had now to make sure of its victory, and the Convention called back the Girondins. The Jacobin club was closed down, and troops were called out to suppress the hungry people who clamoured as usual for "bread and the Constitution of 1793".

The victorious bourgeoisie made short work of any illusions which its enemies—royalists or Socialists—may ever have harboured. Its ideal was "to lose nothing of its revolution, either to the right or to the left." Such was the situation when Napoleon emerged from obscurity as the governor of Paris, after an abortive royalist *coup* in the capital.

III

THE FIRST EMPIRE

A hundred and thirty years after Waterloo, Napoleon Bonaparte remains one of the most fascinating and widely discussed personalities in human history. More books have perhaps been written about him than about any other individual, and in this voluminous literature the most divergent and violently contradictory judgments have been passed on the character and motives of the soldier, the First Consul, the Emperor, and finally on the unhappy prisoner who ended his life on the island of St. Helena.

In our time, the most enthusiastic tribute to the conqueror who occupied Berlin in 1806 has been paid by a German

and Emil Ludwig's portrait of a solitary tragic figure, plotted against, betrayed and abandoned in the hour of his need by those who owed everything in life to his generosity, has created a new Napoleonic legend, beautiful and touching if historically inaccurate.

At the other extreme are those for whom Napoleon is a 19th century Hitler, a Hannibal, an Attila, a blood-thirsty conqueror, a despot whose head was turned by power, an egoistical shirker who abandoned his troops in Russia, ending one of the most disastrous military communiqués in history with the words: "The Emperor is in good health".

A more reasonable opinion has been expressed by the Royalist writer, Jacques Bainville. He points out that while relatively few persons were touched by British naval supremacy, thousands of Europeans were affected by Napoleon's conquests and his forcibly imposed blockade. The result was that the Emperor became the tyrant and the British, when they came, were everywhere hailed as the liberators of the Continent.

The variety and confusion of these conflicting viewpoints are due partly to the man's dynamic personality, partly to a failure to understand the nature of the forces which swept him into power, only to break him without mercy or compunction when he had outlived his utility, played out his part.

The situation in 1796 when the future Emperor was beginning to establish a reputation for military genius, was depressing in the extreme.

The Revolutionary government had completely failed to bring about the promised Utopia and the genuinely progressive forces in the country, once more on the defensive, were being driven underground. Secret democratic societies were formed, the members of which plotted, planned and died for the Constitution of 1793 which had promised universal suffrage to the people of France.

Around Babeuf, disciple of Marat, one of the most sincere and tragic personalities of that era of disillusionment, there gathered a band of ardent young patriots who held their anti-government meetings in the Jardin de St. Geneviève. "The French Revolution," said Babeuf, "is only the forerunner of a far greater and more important revolution which will be the

last one of all," and he was hated accordingly, not only by politicians but by the peasants who had no intention of sharing their newly acquired land with anybody, certainly not with a romantic visionary who declared like Rousseau before him that since the earth belonged to no one, all men were equals.

Given existing conditions, the fate of Babeuf was a foregone conclusion. Bonaparte was ordered to break up his group (the Club du Panthéon), and on the discovery of a plot against the existing authorities, this wilful creature who had made such a nuisance of himself, was condemned to death and promptly executed.

The *Directoire* then proceeded to break up the elections of 1798, which had brought to the forefront a number of Jacobins who had the bad taste to harp on the discredited old story of universal suffrage. The disgruntled Jacobins plotted away merrily, so did the Royalists who thought their moment had come, and it was in this welter of intrigues, accusations and counter-accusations that Lucien Bonaparte, Barras and Siyès took advantage of Napoleon's popularity (he had just returned from Egypt) to carry off the *coup* of the 18th Brumaire.

The bourgeoisie had now conferred authority on a member of its own class, for Napoleon is, above all other things, the supreme example of the bourgeoisie in power. In spite of his marriage with Marie Louise, in spite of his efforts to found an imperial dynasty, he was powerless to get rid of his origins and his régime suffered inevitably from the inherent weakness the fatal contradictions of the great Revolution of which he was the most outstanding product.

Less than twenty years after Waterloo, Lytton Bulwer an Englishman and an enemy, wrote of the fallen giant "Abroad he carried the civilization and the code of France. In the old kingdoms, which have been re-established, he destroyed many of the old ideas, which it had become impossible to restore. Wherever he carried defeat, he carried improvement, and the communications which were to facilitate victory have been utilized to industry and commerce."

To the Italians he said: "People of Italy, the Army of France has broken your chains. The People of France is the friend of all other Peoples! Come to greet it!" To the French he gave the strongest and most efficient administration

they had ever known, an administration which remained largely intact till June 1940. Writing at the end of the last century, John Bodley said: "The whole centralised administration of France, which in its stability has survived every political crisis, was the creation of Napoleon and the keystone of his fabric. It was he who organized the existing administrative divisions of the departments, with the officials supervising them and the local assemblies attached to them. The relations of Church and State are still regulated by his Concordat.* The University which remains the basis of public education, was his foundation. The Civil Code, the Penal Code, the Conseil d'Etat, the Judicial System, in fine every institution which a law abiding Frenchman respects, from the Legion of Honour to the Bank of France and the Comédie Française, was either formed or reorganized by Napoleon."

The upper middle classes were now in complete possession of the country and they gave their enthusiastic support to the Emperor, for the strong and stable administration he had imposed on the land, coupled with the Continental blockade, gave a tremendous fillip to industry and trade.

Unfortunately for them, unfortunately for him, the blockade lasted too long. There were too many wars, too many demands on the patriotism of the French. By 1814, the *grand bourgeoisie* had decided that the Empire was a liability, no longer an asset. If Talleyrand had not plotted against the Emperor, if his brothers had not betrayed him, there would have been others to take their place. If Waterloo had been won that would have settled nothing, for there would have been more Waterloos; the end would not have been avoided, it would merely have been delayed. Napoleon's fate had been sealed by Nelson ten years ago—on Trafalgar day.

Democracy, the practical expression of the human will to be free, cannot flourish in the conditions created by the Empire. France under Napoleon may have been the greatest and most dreaded country on the Continent, but as Seignobos says: "the nation no longer had a voice in the direction of its affairs, or in the choice of its local chiefs. The French ceased to be citizens and became subjects again—no longer of the king, but of the government."§

* The Concordat was abolished by the law of December 1905.

§ Charles Seignobos: "Histoire Sincère de la Nation Française."

As far back as 1803, the First Consul had given a fresh lease of life to the laws which denied to the workers the right to go on strike, and the right to form their own associations. In 1806, the Emperor created a machinery to settle labour disputes, but this institution functioned so obviously in the interests of the employers that the harassed workers, who unlike the peasants had not shared any of the material prosperity of the decade, tried to help each other in spite of the forces which were determined to suppress them.

They formed mutual aid societies—*mutualités*—with the slogan: "*repoussés de partout, ils se soutiennent eux-mêmes*" (rejected by everyone, they help each other). They were entirely non-political, but even so they were forbidden to have more than ten members each, and they soon disappeared for lack of funds, for lack of support, for lack of everything.

All this does not mean that the Revolution was a failure. Quite apart from the great contribution it made to human progress, by giving the peoples of all countries a conception of freedom which was unique for those times, most of the revolutionary principles were upheld and maintained even when the Bourbons were restored to their throne.

The equality of all citizens before the law was no longer questioned, whatever that equality may have actually amounted to; the national guard was preserved, together with the judicial organization, the system of taxes, the codes, the territorial divisions.

The officials of Napoleon's régime retained their jobs, notwithstanding their revolutionary origins. The only important changes were the reintroduction of the Court and the hereditary monarchy, the replacement of the tricolour by the white flag of the Bourbons, a symbolic gesture made by the new king to prove to the world that he refused to accept the revolutionary principle of the sovereignty of the people.

IV

THE RESTORATION

THE peculiarly difficult circumstances under which Louis XVIII began his brief reign, have been admirably summed up by Bulwer Lytton:

"By what party was he to support himself? From what elements could the government be formed, which would assure him a prosperous and peaceful reign? The armies that escorted him to the Tuileries had marched over the prostrate legions of defeated France—The sovereigns who gave him a kingdom were the successful enemies of the people whose interest he had come to cherish. He could not rely upon his army then, for he was the friend of the stranger; he could not rely upon his allies, for he was the sovereign of France."

These difficulties, inherent in the French situation at the time of the Bourbon restoration, were considerably aggravated by Napoleon's dramatic escape from Elba. The enthusiastic welcome accorded to the Emperor by those who had been formed by the Revolution, roused the anger and contempt of the Royalists, who could not forgive their compatriots for so quickly breaking the oath of fidelity taken a few months ago. This sentiment was heartily reciprocated by the other side, "and from this moment," says Seignobos, "dates the separation of the French nation into two opposing camps, separated each from the other by a permanent hostility which has remained to this day the hidden foundation of French political life."

It has been said of the Bourbons, but unjustly in the case of the new king, that they learn nothing and forget nothing. Years ago, the brother of Louis XVI had voted in the *Etats Généraux* against the continuation of the monarchic state. When he returned to France as Louis XVIII he had the intelligence to realize, not only that the past was dead and could not be revived, but that the Napoleonic system had become an integral part of the national structure.

He therefore made no attempt to question the supremacy of the *grande bourgeoisie*, and accepted without cavil "the

two chambers, civil equality, the laws of the year VIII, the prefects, the incomes, the pensions," all the diverse elements which had been co-ordinated and codified by the genius of Napoleon.

If as a result of so much complaisance, France was being strangled to death, what did that matter? If there were not more than 90,000 voters in the land which had been promised universal suffrage, if there were laws galore restricting the liberty of the individual, the University, the Press, that was a small price to pay for the religious fervour with which the unhappy country proved its repentance, and won the forgiveness of the outraged Continent.

For under Louis XVIII, Catholicism became again the official religion of France. Sunday was declared a day of compulsory rest. The descendants of Voltaire thought that jokes about the clergy were in bad taste. The mystical tenderness of Lamartine was quite *à la mode* and Chateaubriand condemned all democratic measures.

France was now a member of the Holy Alliance, the raison d'être of which was expressed by its creators in the clearest and most unambiguous terms: "As the Revolutionary principles may continue to rend the country and thus threaten the peace of other States, the Great Powers recognize it to be their duty to redouble their efforts to safeguard the tranquillity and watch over the interests of their subjects". How well they looked after these interests in countries like Spain, for example, does not concern here. Conditions in France may not have been so outrageously bad, but even so, the masses lived, toiled, suffered and died in the most unbelievable squalor.

"Shopkeepers and artisans," says Seignobos, "continued to lead hard and monotonous lives in quarters which were much too small, and were obliged to spend almost all their time in their shops or workshops. The condition of the salaried workers hired by a big boss was still worse and more precarious; the most miserable of all were the weavers who worked at home. The law obliged the worker to have a *livret* in which the employer entered his comments, and which served therefore as an effective means of surveillance. He was still deprived of the right to strike or to form workers' associations."

The reactionary nature of the new régime can be easily explained when one considers the state of mind of the upper classes, those which had suffered as well as those which had benefited by the mighty upheaval.

The nobles had been terrified into abandoning liberal ideas they may originally have possessed. An aristocratic lady who had so wittily commented on the philosophy of Descartes—"according to Monsieur Descartes, if you join a machine called a dog, join it to a machine called a cat, the result is a little machine called a puppy"—had been speedily silenced if she had, by some miracle, survived the Restoration.

The children of noble families were educated in liberal and ecclesiastical colleges, and if the influence of the bourgeoisie had diminished considerably as far as the male nobles were concerned, the priests continued to be venerated by the women of that class, as well as by the ignorant and superstitious peasants.

It was at this period that the bourgeois code was clearly established, not only for the present but for future generations.

The parents were expected to educate their sons and to find positions for them in official and "liberal" careers; the daughters were married off with a suitable *dot*; any sort of *mésalliance* was severely frowned upon, and private property, that is their own property, was looked upon and worshipped as being second only to God.

The smug complacency, the greed, the hypocrisy which these *nouveaux riches* soon began to display, roused the bitter resentment and scathing contempt of sensitive artistic souls like Flaubert, who hated this class with a hatred that was almost a disease; while Théophile Gautier and his friends soothed their outraged feelings by creating scenes in the streets, and by wearing fantastic costumes calculated to enrage and *épater le bourgeois*.*

All these men, many of whom lived after Louis XVIII, knew that something was radically wrong with the post-

* This dissatisfaction expressed itself in other more intelligent and effective ways such as the great Romantic movement in literature, and the revolt of Delacroix against the "tradition of correct design" as expounded by Ingres and his followers.

Napoleonic society; but as Ralph Fox points out, they hated or distrusted or dreaded the masses, almost as much as they despised their exploiters.

An excursion by the Goncourt brothers into the poor quarters of Paris to obtain materials for a book, is described in the *Diary* as a terrifying adventure. Not till Zola appeared on the scene, did the writers of France realize what a potent source of literary inspiration the "people" could be; and for many a long year the only friends of these unfortunates were persecuted "agitators" like Blanqui and his followers.

If conditions were bad during the reign of the eighteenth Louis, they became infinitely worse when Charles X ascended the throne on the death of his brother.

The new king was extremely popular for the first few months of his reign. "I was in Paris about this time", (1824) says Henry Lytton. "It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm which pervaded it when the abolition of the censorship wound up to the highest pitch the popular excitement."

The king who began his reign under such favourable circumstances, declared: "In the presence of God I swear to my people that I will uphold and honour our holy religion as befits a very Christian king and the eldest son of the Church; to render justice to all my subjects; finally to govern in conformity with the laws of the land and the Constitutional Charter which I swear to observe faithfully, so help me God and his holy prophets."

But his subjects soon discovered that he meant to observe to the letter the first part, and to studiously ignore all the provisions contained in the second part of his oath.

Fanatical, bigoted, bent on making his subjects pay for his past licentiousness, he gave the clergy such a wide latitude, that in the words of Lytton, "the affairs of religion became the daily affairs of the State; laws were brought forward which punished sacrilege as parricide; the Chambers of Deputies resembled a Council of Nice; and the Government interfering—where it is most dangerous to interfere—with the pleasures of the Parisians—elongated the gowns of the actresses and the opera dancers and peremptorily decided how many inches of their ankles should be exposed—

Lo! through the streets of Paris, so gay, so indolent, so prone to ridicule and irreligion, marches the long procession, chaunting the Miserere, and the Minister of War delights the Army with an assurance that that regiment is excellent at prayers, and this regiment incomparable at *Paques*. While the Tartuffe recovers its originality, and is given amidst shouts of applause, as if it were a piece written for the period.

And now, amidst a series of measures, the one more unpopular than the other, the monarchy moves steadily and unhappily on to its destruction."

These measures were numerous, and equally obnoxious to all Frenchmen outside the ranks of the clergy and nobility.

The idea he had of reintroducing the laws of primogeniture, for example, roused the violent opposition of the bourgeoisie, determined to fight tooth and nail to preserve and enlarge its hard-won privileges. In the crisis which arose, it formed a fresh alliance with the people who were willing to overlook the past, so anxious were they to crush this new tyranny which threatened to undo all the work of the Revolution. They had moreover been inspired by the heroic struggle of Greece, and soon all the liberal or pseudo-liberal elements in the country were working together in secret societies.

They were indeed a mixed lot. Men like the old Marquis de Lafayette, still ready for an adventure, the banker Lafitte who was determined to safeguard what he considered to be the rights of his class, became overnight the collaborators of Buonarroti, friend and colleague of Babeuf, and of progressive journalists like Bazard and Blanqui who wrote: "As capital by itself is sterile, as manual labour alone can make it bear fruit, and as on the other hand it is the raw material set working by social forces, the majority of the population deprived of its possession is condemned to forced labour for the profit of the privileged minority."

Such statements were hardly calculated to evoke the enthusiasm of Lafitte and his friends; in fact the only sentiments shared in common by these men separated from each other by such miles of social and economic barriers, were their common hatred for the king, and their belief that by

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hatching conspiracies they could overthrow the tyranny which he sought to impose on his freedom-loving subjects.

All the plots failed, but Charles was one of those Bourbons who learn nothing and forget nothing. He wanted to revive the past and force it on a class which had tasted supreme power under Napoleon, as well as on a people obsessed by the idea that the Constitution of 1793 and universal suffrage would open the gates to a worker's paradise.*

V

THE REVOLUTION OF 1830, LOUIS PHILIPPE THE BOURGEOIS KING

NO king in the world however powerful, could have struggled against the inexorable forces and logic of history, and by attempting the impossible, Charles merely speeded the Revolution which brought about his downfall. The bitter struggle which culminated in his abdication, reached the highest pitch of intensity on the 27th, 28th and 29th July 1830—*Les Trois Glorieuses* as these days came to be called, when the artisans and workers of Paris "waved the tricolour and fought for their liberty."

This crowd was no longer the blind chaotic frenzied mob of 1789. It consisted of men who were developing a distinct class consciousness, who knew what they wanted and were determined to get it, whatever the cost. But the cost would be high and the waiting long; for as soon as the king was removed, the bourgeoisie gave fresh proof of its determination to keep all the power for itself.

Charles had abdicated in favour of his grandson, but the influential middle classes rejected the Bourbon and invited the son of the Duke of Orleans, who had been known to the revolutionaries as Philippe Egalité.‡

* Thirty million Frenchmen live by working, and are deprived of political rights—Blanqui.

‡ He had voted for the execution of Louis XVI.

"The reign of the bankers is about to begin", declared Lafitte exultantly and truthfully, for Louis Philippe was an ideal bourgeois king, having fought for the Revolution at Valmy and Jemappes.

As a sop to public opinion, the number of citizens entitled to vote was raised to 200,000, but when Blanqui was indiscreet enough to reproach his ex-collaborators in the Carbonari for having "broken so many promises", he was promptly arrested by the masters of France. "I am not standing before judges but before enemies," declared the great popular leader who had played such a glorious rôle in the Three Glorious Days. It was true, for from now on Blanqui would be reviled and persecuted, hunted from pillar to post till the people would be strong enough to acclaim him in public, towards the end of his days.

The governing classes of France did not want men like him; they wanted "leaders" like Thiers who was now the *président du Conseil*. Thanks to him, thanks to his colleagues in power, the upper classes entered upon a period of unlimited prosperity, and the first railway was opened between Saint-Etienne and Roanne.

As for the workers—like their fellow victims in England,—they lived in the abominable conditions associated with the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Children of six got up at five in the morning, and trudged sleepily to the factories.* Sixteen-hour days, often eighteen-hour days were accepted in the normal course of things; while the machines without fences, the factories without light or air, broke the bodies (but not the spirit) of the workers who were deprived of medicine, pensions, insurance, and every other amenity which we associate with civilization.

They found useful allies in the disenfranchised lower middle classes and the anti-clerical Republicans, but the atrocious repression which Thiers was to let loose soon terrified into submission all but the most determined of the rebels, the most miserable of the workers.

Secret societies flourished everywhere; the *mutualités* of Napoleon's days came back to life as "resistance" societies with their own funds and a well thought out programme, in

* Cf. "The Cry of the Children" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

prising was crushed almost immediately, but when the leader and Barbès were condemned to death, public opinion expressed itself with such passionate vehemence that the authorities did not dare to proceed with the sentence.

They were being defied continually, everywhere. The Church, terrified by the intensity of the hatred felt for it by the anti-clerical Republicans, tried to open a "liberal wing"; but Guizot, less intelligent than the priests, was absurd enough to ally himself with Metternich and the Czar, in a futile attempt to overcome the resistance.

Public meetings were rigorously prohibited, but it became the rule to hold banquets where about a thousand persons turned up, and where mammoth petitions clamouring for electoral reforms were enthusiastically signed.

Ardent Republicans who believed in universal suffrage, as well as the cheated despoiled workers dreaming always of 1793, wholeheartedly associated themselves with this campaign. The functions were held for about six months; then the Government, thinking it should make its power felt, prohibited the banquet of the 22nd February (1848) which was to be preceded by a cortège.

This was the signal for the decisive flare-up. The banquet was not held, but the procession became a mass demonstration which continued till the following day. There were the usual demonstrations, with the rebels—students, workers, small businessmen,—fighting the troops near the Place de la Concorde, and with Rachaele singing the Marseillaise at the Théâtre Français.

The final stage was reached when the National Guard deserted the Government. Guizot resigned and Thiers who took his place expressed his willingness to evacuate the capital, then to pound it into submission by the armed forces of the state.

But Louis Philippe who was more humane than his minister, preferred to abdicate in favour of his grandson; and the Parisians respected his wish as much as they had respected the decision of his predecessor.

They made it clear that they had had enough of royalty, and compelled the provisional government of which moderates like Lamartine and Arago were members, to accept Flocon,

They began by forming a *garde mobile*, the members of which were recruited from the dregs of the Parisian population. When the Stock Exchange was reopened on the 8th March, it was announced that bills of exchange could not be renewed, and as if this was not bad enough, the Government levied a new tax of 45 centimes on all direct taxes.

This was a master stroke, for the country was now divided into two camps. The businessmen and peasants bitterly resented these financial measures, and the reactionaries vehemently protested their innocence, swearing it was the fault of the workers' government. Conditions were disquieting in the extreme, and although the workers succeeded in having the elections postponed till April, it did not help them much, for the peasants voted as one man against the newly established Republic.

The reactionaries who had been terrified out of their wits breathed freely again, and now begins the old old story of broken promises and broken heads.

Blanqui and his followers who organized an armed manifestation, and proclaimed a new government at the Palais Bourbon were overwhelmed and dealt with in the usual manner. Blanqui was deported, the clubs were closed, the Government workshops looked upon with disfavour.

On the 21st June they were officially closed down, and the outraged workers promptly revolted. General Clément Thomas boasted of teaching the *canaille* a lesson, and for three whole days the rebels were allowed to organize themselves. They occupied half of Paris and were delirious with joy, but the more decent deputies knowing what fate had in store for them, were overcome with shame. Arago interposed, only to be silenced by a voice which exclaimed: "Monsieur Arago, vous n'avez jamais eu faim." (Monsieur Arago, you have never been hungry). Hunger and despair, the sickness of hope long deferred had given these leaderless men the courage to revolt, but they were poor substitutes indeed for the guns and the money which their enemies possessed.

When it was finally let loose, the repression was atrocious, the casualty list being 12,000 prisoners, 4,000 deported, 3,000 dead. Georges Sand exclaimed: "I no longer believe in a Republic which begins by slaughtering its proletariat;" but

others less squeamish set to work at once to establish it firmly, this ghost of a Republic which would now be built on the blood of its creators.

The Assembly had just voted a Constitution by which a plebiscite would be held to elect a President. The elections were fixed for the 10th December, and as a preparation for the great event the proposals for the ten-hour day were finally rejected, the masters having decreed that the worker should spend thirteen out of the twenty-four hours in his factory or workshop.

Nor was this all. It had been stated in the Constitution that all French citizens were entitled to work, and although this clause had not been followed by any legislative action, it was objected to and struck out by Thiers and Tocqueville. The ministers of Louis Philippe came back to power and thousands of small businessmen were ruined, because they were refused any sort of an amicable settlement by the classes in power.

The elections were held under these auspicious circumstances. The candidates were Cavaignac, Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin, Raspail and Louis Napoleon who defeated all his rivals, because the French people had but little education in democracy, and because his supporters knew how to exploit to the utmost the glory of his name.

The new President selected most of his ministers from among his Orleanist supporters, who agreed with the Bourbon clique only to suppress criminals like the Blanquists, with their pernicious talk about justice and reform.

As Ribard says, "it was now a question of driving the Republicans out of the Republic," for the old magistrates who found their jobs waiting for them were animated by a profound hatred and distrust of the progressive intellectuals with the terrifying motto: *Vive la République démocratique et sociale.*

As a matter of fact, terror was at the bottom of all their actions, the fundamental cause of the cruelty they displayed.

What could these staid respectable bourgeois make of the wild depraved creatures with their fiery songs, their crazy idea that property was theft? What could they do with such perverted souls but stamp them out of existence, together with

the paraphernalia of their dangerous faith? No sooner was the nephew of the great Bonaparte installed in power, than the counter offensive began; a counter offensive which was organised so thoroughly that even the emblems of rebellion—red ties and girdles, political songs, trees of liberty—were systematically hunted out and ruthlessly suppressed.

Thiers who had always been opposed to primary education, became the enthusiastic supporter of the minister Falloux, who wanted the clergy to have a preponderant influence in the question of education. By the law Falloux introduced in 1850, the right to teach was restored to the Jesuits, and the rectors were placed under the authority of the bishops.

In spite of everything however, the Republic showed an astonishing vitality. The propertied classes which formed temporary alliances with the masses when their collaboration was necessary, could not in a day make the people forget the lessons they had learnt. When the Assembly was called upon to vote for the expenses of an expedition to Rome, (undertaken in favour of the Pope) the Government arrested thirty-three Republicans who registered their protest. The clubs in which progressive political ideas were discussed had already been closed down, and the co-operatives formed in 1848 were slowly dying from protracted neglect.

And yet there was a fresh outburst of popular indignation, yet another proof of the will to be free, unmistakably expressed in the supplementary elections of 1850. A new coalition was formed at the base, and it is interesting to speculate what would have happened if a wave of commercial prosperity had not given a fresh lease of life to the forces of reaction.

Once they were sure of themselves, they stopped at nothing to re-establish their power. The peasants had thought that by voting for Louis Napoleon they would get rid of the hated salt tax, but it did not take them long to find out their mistake.

The next step in the programme was the abolition of universal suffrage, and the suppression of the popular press. Only those papers which could deposit 50,000 francs could henceforth be published; only those tax-payers who had settled in a place for not less than three years would now be entitled to vote in the elections.

soon became evident that his idea of peace was as vague and as ambiguous as his conception of socialism.

The *coup d'état* took place on the 2nd December 1851, the would-be Emperor having won over to his side the industrialists and bankers. The Republicans naturally did everything they could to prevent this outrage, and in the trouble that followed, one of their leaders—Baudin—was killed in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, while calling on the people to resist and rebel.

After 30,000 persons had been arrested and disposed of all over the country, the Government declared that "order" was restored; the elections were held on the 21st December, and nobody was surprised at the official announcement that seven million Frenchmen had voted for the Emperor.

The new Constitution promulgated on the 14th January, was based on that of the Revolutionary year VIII. Universal suffrage was reintroduced but there were official candidates, so that the voters knew exactly which person or persons enjoyed Government patronage.

The Empire was now a *fait accompli*; the peasants caring little for political ideas, readily acquiesced hoping it would give them a stable administration, while the army befriended it, knowing itself to be the mainstay of the régime.

But most enthusiastic of all were the middle class industrialists, and just one year after he had assumed power the Emperor was authorized to sanction "works of public utility and enterprises of general interest, to accord concessions by decree after an enquiry by the *Conseil d'Etat*, and to grant the authorization required by law for the formation of limited companies."

That same year he was persuaded by his financial advisers to adopt a number of far reaching measures, such as the foundation of the *Compagnie générale transatlantique*, the creation of insurance companies, and the opening of banks both at home and abroad.

If things could have remained at this point, everything would have been perfect; all the more so as the third Napoleon was a timid kindly individual who liked his people, and asked for nothing better than to be liked in return.

But things moved ahead rapidly, and the Empire which was to have bestowed on the country the blessings of peace, brought nothing in its train but conflicts and wars.

The Crimean War was undertaken in alliance with the Turks and the British; and when the country was faced with a grave financial crisis resulting from the exploitation of the Californian gold mines, the Emperor recalled his early socialism and his youthful contact with the Italian patriots.

But it would be a mistake to imagine that the war against Austria for Italian freedom, was entered upon only to appease public opinion. Louis Napoleon was a complex character, swayed by many motives—both noble and ignoble—and when in 1859 the Italian campaign became a political necessity, he could honestly maintain that he had promised in good faith to help Cavour and his friends.

The War begun with such mixed motives had mixed results. Militarily it was a success since France was able to annex Nice and Savoy, but politically it resulted in innumerable complications. The Catholics were furious because the Italian King was allowed to occupy large tracts of the Papal territories, nor did it pacify either peasants or workers.

More serious still, the British disapproved, and to placate them, the hero of the war was obliged to alienate the businessmen of France by making important concessions to their British rivals.

It was the same with the other wars, for the attacks on despotic hereditary monarchies like those of Russia and Austria, had enraged the reactionaries who wanted law and order—their own order of course.

The only persons who were pleased were the disgruntled Republicans, and they showed their gratitude by demanding an ever-increasing share in the affairs of the Government. The French people had given one more proof of their amazing vitality, for deprived of money, of leaders, of a press to uphold their claims, they succeeded in creating a workers' movement which those in power could no longer despise.

The existence of this movement was one of the factors which obliged the harassed sovereign to make a number of concessions, and to reintroduce the Parliamentary system which he heartily disliked.

The results were disastrous for the existing régime; the year 1863 produced the phenomenon of a labour candidate, and Victor Duruy—Minister of Public Instruction and ardent champion of female education—introduced a number of revolutionary reforms.

There had been no strikes since the bloody repression of the year '48, but now they cropped up again everywhere, as though the workers were determined to make up for lost time.

In 1862, two hundred of them went to London to witness for themselves the marvels of the Exhibition, having been allowed to do so in the fond belief that their increased knowledge would mean increased profits for the men who employed them. Imagine therefore the horror of the employers when, during the course of the supplementary elections of 1864, the workers published the "Manifesto of the Sixty" in which the bourgeois were referred to as "our elders in emancipation."

The methods by which the emancipation was to be won were not clearly defined, and the authors of the manifesto still relied too much on the conventional phrases of 1793. But the men to whom it was addressed had learnt their lesson; they had finally understood that the people would have to "save themselves," and the London Exhibition had given them the idea of an international organization to carry on the fight.

It is therefore not correct to say that the great progress made in French socialist thought resulted from the creation of the First International, and that these epoch making ideas were foreign to the spirit and the genius of France.

French co-operative societies and the *mutualités* were making tremendous headway, the first syndicates had been formed and Varlin was talking of transforming them beyond recognition, while Marx in London was completing his work.

Deprived of funds, frowned upon by the law, these syndicates could not achieve much, but they had already considered the question of old-age pensions, salaries, unemployment, collective bargaining; in a word they had envisaged all the manifold problems which haunt and beset the wage-earner's life.

When the First International issued its epoch making manifesto, the ground was prepared and labour gave it a tremendous reception. The law of 1864 which recognized the

right of the workers to form their own associations was a mighty victory for labour, but the Government and its supporters were determined to hold out and fight to the last. They had been obliged to recognize the strike as a legal weapon, but since nothing was said about the right of the workers to organize their meetings, this important question was left to the whims of individual magistrates. The French section of the International was dissolved; the troops fired on strikers, but the undaunted survivors organized public funerals for those who had died. Blanqui wrote:

"We know the liberty which pleads against communism. It is the liberty to enslave, the liberty to exploit, the liberty—as Renan says—of the privileged few to use the masses as their foot stool. This liberty the people denounce as crime and oppression. How many slaveries are needed to create one such liberty?"

But setbacks notwithstanding, things were going well. By 1868 it was possible to start a paper after making a declaration, and the press availed itself to the full of this heaven-sent opportunity to pour scorn and abuse on the régime which it detested.

Riots broke out at the funeral of the journalist Victor Noir, for whose death the Emperor's cousin was responsible, the students of Paris taking part in the demonstrations.

It became obvious to all that the Empire was doomed, but so reluctant was the ruler to give up his throne that in spite of a serious illness he ordered a plebiscite, to keep up the pretence of the sovereignty of the people.

Seven million Frenchmen voted for the Empire, a million and a half against. The apparent victory settled nothing however; there were strikes and disputes in a number of provinces and the authorities realized that nothing but war could divert public attention from their manifold failings.

While the people of France were fighting for their freedom, many things were happening on the other side of the Rhine. Bismarck had begun the unification of Germany, but the foolish Emperor was blind to the dangers of German aggression. He made Krupp an officer of the Legion of Honour, looked on with equanimity at the German attack

against Denmark and Austria, and with 400,000 men to defend his country, he allowed his neighbour to train and equip a million young men.

He thought he was playing the rôle of a great diplomat when he demanded a number of concessions in return for these "favours." Bismarck promptly began to discredit him in the courts of Europe as an ambitious intriguer, and since he too had decided that war was necessary, followed with attention the developments in France.

The story of the telegrams is too well known to be repeated, and since the Bonapartists also were hell bent for war, they finally obtained their hearts' desire—and war was declared.

This was on the 19th July 1870, when the French soldiers marched blithely to battle, unaware of the strength of this unexpected enemy, unaware of the failings of the men who were leading them.

From the 12th to the 17th August, the blunders of the French High Command were equalled only by the heroism of the troops. At home, the people openly tried to overthrow the Government, enraged as they were by the course of events. Evening after evening the Parisians gathered in their clubs and cafés to discuss the war, to try and find out what was happening at the front.

The French army fought in a welter of orders and counter orders—till the disaster at Sedan, when the road to Paris lay undefended before the invaders.

The Emperor capitulated on the 2nd September, giving himself up to the enemy with 100,000 men and a number of officers. When on the 3rd September, the Empress received the news of the defeat, the Parisians gathered by thousands at the Place de la Concorde. For them the war was certainly not over; speaking for the left, Jules Favre demanded the abolition of the Empire and the immediate appointment of a committee of defence; and only when the crowd had finally dispersed did the terrified deputies depart from the Chamber.

VIII

THE THIRD REPUBLIC

FROM now on the authorities were faced by a new problem: the continual presence of patriotic citizens who wanted to make sure the people were not betrayed.

On the 4th September, excited Parisians shouting *Vive la République* assembled in crowds outside the Palais Bourbon. When a railing gave way the Assembly was invaded, and the Deputies were obliged to carry on their discussions in the presence of the men, who made it abundantly clear that they would stop at nothing if their wishes were ignored.

When Gambetta got up to speak, he addressed not his colleagues, but the uninvited visitors who interrupted him continually: "We all want the abdication of the Emperor," the orator declared, and his listeners replied: "We want the Republic as well." "Be calm," pleaded Gambetta, "things must be done properly," and the visitors shouted: "And the Republic must be proclaimed."

It was proclaimed at the Town Hall where the ministers were dragged by the frenzied masses; even Blanqui declared a truce when it called on the "army and the nation" to defend the *patrie*; students, businessmen, workers, in fact all Paris swore unstinted allegiance to the newly born Republic which refused to capitulate.

The events leading up to the 4th September were outwardly similar to those of 1792 and 1848, but the discerning few could notice a difference, both subtle and profound. Unlike their ancestors of the 18th century, the Parisians were no longer intoxicated by words. Defeat after defeat had taught them to reflect, and when the new régime was proclaimed they knew exactly what the Republic meant.

It meant a cleaning up of the State in the interests of the people; it meant above all that the war was to continue.

THE COMMUNE

The days which followed represent one of the most tragic, the most interesting, the most widely discussed periods in European history.

The Commune is hated or admired, condemned or defended, but none can deny that it made unforgettable history by creating a workers' government—the very first in the world.

The following paragraph admirably sums up the soul-irring events leading up to its creation and final dissolution:

"The Franco-German Armistice was signed on the 28th January 1871; on the 8th February was elected the National Assembly, composed of Conservatives who wanted peace with smarm. But Paris had voted for the Republicans, who were firmly determined to fight to the end. The suppression of salaries and the pay of the National Guard, together with the distrust felt for the Assembly which settled down at Versailles, increased the antagonism which already existed between Paris and the Government. A tactless move by Thiers gave rise to disturbances. At the end of February the Parisians had dragged 300 guns—for which they had paid from the Champs Elysées to Montmartre and Belleville, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Prussians. On the 18th March, the Government tried to remove them. You will never be able to carry on any financial operations, unless you take away the guns and get rid of the riff-raff. This question must be settled, and then it will be possible to proceed with our business." *

"On the side of the Commune, fighting side by side with the Parisians were revolutionaries like Delescluze, Ferré, Rigault, the scientist Elisé Reclus, the painter Courbet and the teacher Louise Michele; foreign officers like the Poles Dombrowski and Wroblewski, the Italian La Cecilia and officers like the military genius, Colonel Rossel, who had conducted in the east a brilliant campaign against the Prussians.

"On the 19th March, Rossel sent this letter of resignation to the Minister of War: 'Having been informed by a telegram from Versailles that there are two parties in France struggling against each other, I ally myself without hesitation on the side of the one which does not include in its ranks, generals guilty of treachery and betrayal.'

"A few months later he defined his position more clearly before the Council of War: 'Hating the men who have betray-

* Statement made by Thiers before the Parliamentary Committee appointed to enquire into the disturbances of the 18th March 1871.

ed my country, I am fighting under the flag of the workers of Paris.'

"The struggle lasted from the 18th March to the 28th May, and atrocities were committed on either side. The badly organized troops of the Commune were finally crushed by the armies of Thiers, reinforced by the prisoners liberated by Bismarck. On the 28th May the last Communards were shot against the *Mur des Fédérés* at the Père Lachaise.

"This bloody revolt had cost Paris 30,000 victims." *

But this sombre episode began remarkably well. The Commune was proclaimed on the 26th March amid scenes of delirious enthusiasm, and looking back to those days after so many years, one is truly astonished at the results it achieved in spite of so many drawbacks.

Deprived of Blanqui, their venerated leader, the Communards governed Paris with remarkable efficiency. They fed the capital, meat and spices being sold almost at cost price. The Post continued to function, although Thiers had deliberately disorganized the department; the hospitals and the poor law administration were better organized than they had ever been before. Education was to be free, compulsory and secular, and it was decreed that the Church should be separated from the State. Employment bureaux, charging no fees, found jobs for the workers; night labour was prohibited, together with fines in the factories, and payments of arrears on house rents were postponed for the moment. Owners of pawnshops were forbidden to sell pawned articles, and a strict control was established on goods and materials bought over by the State.

The financial record of the Commune was equally impressive. Its delegates asked the Bank for an advance of not more than two million francs; the budget revealed a surplus of 800,000 francs, the Communards having spent 41 million francs as against the tremendous expenditure of Thiers and his friends.

During the entire life of the régime the Bank was guarded by its own personnel, extra precautions being entirely

* "Paris et son Peuple"—This pamphlet was published by the Information Service of the French General Delegation in the Levant, and bears the name of the Exhibition organized, under the patronage of the French Government, to celebrate the liberation of Paris.

superfluous, and the assistant governor had such a high opinion of the Communards, that when things went wrong he helped one of them—Beslay—to escape into Switzerland.

What then were the reasons, what the circumstances which led to the failure of this magnificent experiment? To begin with, the leaders of the Commune failed to realize how much the world had changed since 1792. So great was the fascination of the mighty Revolution, that they still thought and acted in terms of the past.

Then there was the human factor which played an all important part in the destinies of the Commune. The members of the government often quarrelled amongst themselves, the way men have done since the beginning of time, all over the world. But these personal rivalries which remain to this day the bane of all left wing movements were particularly inexcusable in 1871, for the Communards should not have forgotten for a moment the deadly enemies who were waiting to destroy them—and the work they had done.

This perhaps was their greatest mistake, this failure theirs to forestall their enemies. If they had thought over it after they would easily have understood that personal feuds may possibly be forgotten, but that a clash of ideologies, a great to privilege, mean war to the death.

Kill or be killed is the only slogan in wars of this kind. Duval and Eudes had understood this truth, and they endeavoured in vain to persuade their colleagues to attack the reactionaries who had settled down at Versailles.

In Paris itself there existed a dangerous fifth column, composed of the bourgeois who hated the Commune. These men gave vital information to Thiers, but they kept their liberty, and only when the government was at its last gasp was the death penalty introduced for dishonest officials.

But before it disappeared, it unmistakably proved its revolutionary character. It was decreed that that deputies could be recalled, that judges should be elected, that the maximum salary an official could receive would be 6,000 francs.

The paper *Père Duschene*, edited by Vermersch, declared with truth that they were carrying on the work of Marat and Hébert. This work the other side was bent on destroying, and since it enjoyed so many advantages, it succeeded in its aim.

Delescluze, the old Jacobin to whom the defence was entrusted, performed miracles of valour, and won the admiration of Dombrowski the Pole, who had offered his sword to the workers of France. Delescluze did not know that the eyes of freedom loving people all over the world were fixed on his city; but before he died, he heard of the students in Moscow and St. Petersburg who were drinking to the success of the cause which he loved.

GAMBETTA, THIERS, MAC-MAHON

The Commune was crushed, and "order" was restored, but there was one important fact which could no longer be ignored. There had been three Glorious Days in 1848; there were three such months in 1871, for the time honoured methods of physical violence were becoming increasingly inadequate in the fight against the workers.

A strike in the northern mines was savagely crushed in 1872, but the authorities knew well they had no cause to rejoice, for the whole problem of labour remained to be solved.

Men like Gambetta were beginning to realize that electoral manoeuvres could be far more effective than prisons or guns. He dreamt of a Republic which would "know how to welcome those who loyally accepted it, particularly those enlightened aristocrats who sincerely embrace our cause." And when the left centre proposed a republican institution in 1874 he tried to reassure the suspicious conservatives. If this project is carried through, he said, "you will play an eminent rôle, and one which will safeguard your leisure, your precedents and your social authority."

Thiers also became converted to this viewpoint. A Republic which would calm the masses without depriving the propertied classes of their money or their power: surely that was an ideal to strive and work for; a far more satisfactory solution than the re-establishment of a king who might get out of control!

Things would be easy, since the monarchists were quarrelling amongst themselves—violently and persistently. There was the Comte de Chambord who would be king, but only if the white flag of the Bourbons and not the revolutionary tricolour was accepted by the country. Then there were the Orléanists

the Bonapartists, the followers of the Duc d'Aumale who dreamt of a dictatorship.

A past master in statecraft like Louis Adolphe Thiers could work at his ease in this atmosphere of confusion, all the more so as he knew what he wanted and had laid out his plans.

He had decided he would remain the master of France, with the help of the Bank and the magnates of industry.

He consolidated his power by a series of measures, the most important of which was the "favoured nation" clause in treaty with Bismarck.

He negotiated state loans with Rothschild, and pacified the old aristocrats by restoring to them the lands which the Emperor had confiscated.

New taxes to the tune of 800 million francs, which fell heavily on the poor, were levied on matches, on transports and on receipts, to pay the indemnity of 5 milliard francs demanded by the Prussians.

When the Commission appointed to investigate the actions of the Commune was making its enquiries, Thiers made a tremendous fuss about the rôle played by the First International, and nobody was surprised when a law was passed in 1872, making it a criminal offence to be a member of an organization "whose very existence is a crime, because its members being without a *patrie* its avowed object is to associate the efforts of French evil doers with those of foreign evil doers, working outside the country."

By 1873 the indemnity of 5 milliard francs had been completely paid, and the German occupation came to an end. That same year, a series of regulations meant to limit the powers of the executive in general, and the parliamentary powers of the President in particular, were proposed and carried through. It was an important political crisis, and it resulted in the overthrow of Thiers and his government.

He was succeeded by Mac-Mahon, a more ferocious anti-Communard than the ex-minister himself. When this gentleman of Scottish descent became the President, the title was conferred on him for a period of seven years, in the hope that such a long term of office would suffice to decide the troublesome question of the dynastic succession.

While the Duc de Broglie was making frantic efforts to settle the quarrels between the supporters of the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris, Mac-Mahon's Republic went ahead merrily, passing anti-republican laws.

The idea was to safeguard what was ambiguously referred to as the "moral order"; this order, it appeared, could be upheld by erecting the Basilica of the Sacred Heart to commemorate the defeat of the Commune, and by the dissolution of the syndicates, the law against the International being extended to include all labour organizations, whatever their object.

In spite of everything however, the popular will made itself felt in such an irresistible manner at every election, that the clever Gambetta no longer talked of the Republic without referring to "the liberty of conscience," which no power on earth could now take away from the people.

Then there was that militant nobleman, the Comte de Paris who so hated his rival, that he encouraged his followers to vote for the Republic.

On the 30th January 1875, Wallons's amendment to the Constitutional project was passed by a majority of one. This amendment ensured that the "President of the Republic would be elected by both Chambers, and could stand for re-election." The constitutional pact was voted for gradually during the following months, and consisted of laws defining the powers of the President, of the Senate and of the two Chambers, as well as those dealing with the electoral system, the duration of a term of office and universal suffrage.

Amazed at the unbelievably rapid recovery of France, Bismarck thought seriously of attacking her again, desisting only because of British intervention and that of the Czar. Both these countries were opposed to the existence of a too powerful Germany, and Britain with her power over French finance could safely afford to encourage the Republic.

The Prussian menace had awakened national sentiment, so that the elections of 1876 resulted in a strong republican majority, and a resounding victory for Gambetta and his clique.

It was at this critical moment that the syndicates were reformed. Labour candidates repeatedly expressed socialistic

convictions, published radical programmes (which were taken up by the students) and demanded the release of the condemned Communards.

A workers' delegation attended the Philadelphia Exhibition, and came back with the idea of a socialist congress. This congress was held in Paris in 1876, and although the London Blanquists disapproved, Jules Guesde insisted on the significance of the event. From now on, labour candidatures became more and more frequent; in fact there was always a candidate when sufficient money was collected to cover the cost of an election.

These manifestations of labour consciousness, coupled with the ferocious anti-clerical sentiments of the Republicans, so terrified the President, that he decided to create a little crisis of his own.

He therefore liquidated Jules Simon, President of the Conseil, taking him to be a dangerous radical, whereas Simon had described himself as "profoundly conservative and profoundly republican." In the name of certain sections of the *grande bourgeoisie* which disapproved of the too rapid development of the Republic, Mac-Mahon declared his firm intention to combat any "attempt to modify radically her great institutions;" and with this idea in mind, he overhauled the administration, replacing the more liberal minded deputies with the officials of the Empire.

But the three hundred and sixty-three deputies who had been disposed of so summarily and who were determined not to take things lying down, signed a manifesto which became overnight the Republican programme. When the elections were held, three hundred out of the three hundred and sixty-three deputies were sent back to the Chamber in spite of all manoeuvres; in the words of Ribard, "a public conscience which would no longer yield to the simple threat of authority, now existed in France."

But the Catholics and the Orleanists were determined not to give way, and there was talk of a military *coup*, as if the Government was being threatened by an alien enemy. When the elections to the *conseils généraux* resulted in another republican victory, President and Orleanists were equally terrified and the enraged Mac-Mahon reluctantly decided to reform his cabinet with the majority in the Chambers. The

Parliamentary Republic, reinforced by the results of the municipal elections, was an irrevocably established fact.

Egalité, the first Socialist paper which had just been launched on its career, vehemently supported the worker Chausse who was standing for an election. Guesde was arrested for trying to hold an international congress which the authorities had banned, and his trial turned out to be a gift from heaven, for it gave him a platform such as he would never have obtained if he had been left to himself. It was during the proceedings that "socialism" was defined in clear simple terms, and it was Lafargue, son-in-law of Marx, who spread this new knowledge among the rank and file of the workers. Guesde said:

"The Revolution we are calling upon you to accomplish touches only the idle, only the landed, industrial and commercial feudalism which has succeeded the feudalism of the nobility and the sword."

To combat so great a danger, force and violence were no longer enough. Subtlety was necessary; a quality so conspicuously absent in the intellectual make up of the warlike President, that after yet another republican victory in the Senate, the poor harassed Mac-Mahon had no alternative but to resign.

IMPORTANT REFORMS

In the meanwhile Jules Guesde was travelling all over the country, teaching the people that scientific rational socialism which they totally ignored. Syndicates sprang up almost everywhere, and over five hundred of these bodies had been formed when the veteran Blanqui, no longer the street fighter of 1848, was elected deputy of Bordeaux.

The working classes like their leaders had learnt the necessity of systematic construction, and at the Socialist Congress held at Marseilles in 1879, the labour party was formed; a solid achievement which future dissensions were powerless to destroy.

The members of the new government headed by Jules Grévy, were certainly more intelligent than their ill fated predecessors. It was proclaimed that from now on the national fête would be the 14th July, the national hymn the revolu-

tionary Marseillaise, and that the spot where Delescluze had fallen would be officially renamed the Place de la République.

But the authorities were terrified when the Parisians decided that they too would honour the seventy-one Communeards who had been shot against the Wall. The demonstration of the 23rd May 1880 was prohibited, and when the masses were insistent, they tried to use force to break up the procession.

The demonstrators succeeded however in covering with flowers the graves of the victims. It was a minor victory, important symbolically; but it was followed by a much greater triumph when Gambetta obtained from the Chambers an amnesty for the prisoners who had been involved in the Commune.

Gambetta who was no fool, had been put on his guard by the election at Belleville of the cobbler Trinquet, who had distinguished himself at the trial of Louise Michel in July 1880. Then there was Blanqui, the old war horse, whose appearance and speeches wherever he went became a triumphant expression of the popular will. When he died on the first day of the year in 1881, a hundred thousand workers turned up at his funeral. In the words of Ribard: "One stage of history had come to an end."

The Chambers had now to discuss those popular rights and demands without which universal suffrage would be nothing but a farce. Much against their will they were obliged to give a social content to the Constitution of 1875, and slowly but surely, the immediate reforms envisaged by the Commune became the law of the land.

The law of 1814, prohibiting all work on Catholic holidays, was unceremoniously abolished; the Government could no longer close down liquor shops, and the right to peddle wares was given to any individual who had obtained a licence from the proper authorities.

The most important reform of all however was the introduction of free compulsory and secular education, which immediately gave rise to fresh conflicts with the Church. Since the Middle Ages the Catholic hierarchy had looked upon the instruction of the young as its special affair, and it fought tooth and nail to prevent any threat to its privilege, any

invasion of its domain. Noisy battles were fought over the wording of official texts, the adherents of "moral and civic education" being fanatically opposed to the persons who were concerned about their "duties towards God".

The radical atheistic bourgeoisie of the French Revolution had become Conservative and Catholic. It was left to the *bourgeoisie moyenne* to carry on the fight, but these new radicals, like all those who are confronted by a powerful enemy became so obsessed by their anti-clerical sentiments, that they ended up by believing that the priests were responsible for everything that went wrong.

It was an absurd attitude to take up and it came as a godsend to the governing classes, who allowed their opponents to argue interminably about the necessity of separating the Church from the State. It left untouched the economic forces that were ruling the country; for the Minister was, as in the past, an agent of the Bank.

The workers moreover were being increasingly seduced by anarchistic propaganda; and instead of welcoming as collaborators all the progressive forces in the country, they were foolish enough to isolate themselves and to alienate many liberal minded persons who would willingly have been their friends.

The struggle for democratic liberties was therefore painfully slow. Le Chapelier's law was not abolished till 1884; the workers were at last given the right to strike and to form their own unions, but the discussions on this point had gone on endlessly, and the results were partly nullified by the invention of a new "crime",—that of hindering others in their work.

Those at the helm of affairs had forged a new weapon for themselves, and since they were sure of their position, they agreed with Cardinal Lavigerie who announced to the faithful that they could accept the Republic without offending the Church.

"BOURGEOIS" DEMOCRACY

The Third Republic has often been reproached for the instability of its governments, but the instability was more apparent than real, since most of them followed the policies and directions of the financial interests which dominated the land.

Almost all Frenchmen outside the ranks of the proletariat hoped that with a reasonable amount of intelligence and good luck they too could enter the enchanted circle of capitalist enterprise. American business methods and American propaganda were making their effects felt; revolutionary feelings began to be discredited, and the one-time radicals soothed their conscience by talking of reforms—the sort of which would leave untouched the existing order on fundamental respects.

It therefore became the fashion in leftist circles to ridicule "bourgeois" democracy. Right down to the thirties of our own century Marxists ignored the fact that the concrete results of this democracy, particularly those relating to the liberty and security of the individual, "are extremely valuable, and must if possible be preserved."*

From now on the colonial question is inevitably added to the struggle for democracy inside the country itself. The barbarous cruelty with which indigenous populations were often treated by all the Empire building countries in the early days of Imperialist expansion, has roused the indignation of all decent people; but those who denounce the exploitation of the coloured peoples, forget the manner in which white workers were dealt with by men of their own race.

That children of five and six should have been compelled to work for sixteen hours every day, that employers should have repeatedly refused to take the most elementary precautions to decrease accidents in their factories, appears incredible to us to-day, too fantastic to be true.

Yet it was so, both in England and in France. In the latter country the Senate continually rejected all proposals to fix by law the working hours of the day; and not till 1884 did the authorities, alarmed by the frequency and seriousness of accidents in the mines, begin to consider ways and means of ensuring the health and safety of their underpaid men.

And yet when a strike broke out at Decazeville in 1885, the Minister for War, General Boulanger, sent out his troops to shoot down the men. The big industrialists and landed proprietors, who were carrying on a protectionist campaign,

* Mysindia, July 1945.

were helped by Déroulède, President of the League of Patriots, who was clamouring for a Franco-Russian alliance directed against Germany; for the reactionaries knew well how to use the patriotism of the people to further their own ends.

It was not difficult to deceive the poor man in the street who was anxious to understand what his rulers were doing. A number of socialists had been elected deputies in 1886; the strike at Decazeville had resulted in a lively socialist interpellation, and it appeared to the public that parliamentary democracy was, at long last, an authoritative expression of the popular will.

From now on therefore, it was not easy to decide what rôle exactly the leftists played in a ministerial crisis, the confusion being increased by the popularity of General Boulanger who was a disconcerting *mélange* of opportunist and patriot.

The cabinet of the financier Rouvier therefore boldly gave up all attempts to introduce radical reforms. It resorted to the old familiar tricks which had been tried and found wanting in the days of Mac-Mahon, the result being a closing up of the leftist ranks, so that the minority of 92 which existed at the time of the Decazeville strike became a republican majority of 150—if not more.

The crisis revolved round the dubious personality of General Boulanger, who became overnight an object of hatred or a popular hero. A scandal in which Jules Grévy's son-in-law was involved, not only increased the General's popularity and roused national indignation against the corruption of the deputies, but it became a powerful instrument in the hands of the rightists against the Parliament itself.

Jules Grévy was forced to resign, and there were violent demonstrations at the Place de la Concorde. Boulanger who retired in 1888 gave a new slogan to the people—"Dissolution, Constitution, Revision,"—a slogan which captured the imagination of the public.

From now on this question of revision became the crucial point of the controversy. Boulanger was elected in two departments with a thumping majority, but the Republicans did not understand the gravity of the crisis till the Comte de Paris openly declared he was in favour of revision.

As for the proletarian parties, they foolishly tried to remain aloof from the quarrels of "bourgeois" democracy; even Guesde failed to realize the importance of this democracy for their future development.

Matters came to a head when Boulanger, feeling sure of himself, told a Conservative audience: "The Republic should repudiate the Jacobin heritage of the present Republic." This opened the eyes of the most purblind; the militant General was threatened by the authorities, upon which he promptly fled to the safety of Brussels. Two years later he disappeared for ever by taking his own life.

The question of revision was thus finally settled, particularly when the Republicans received a decisive vote in 1889.

While these battles were being fought at home, the process of colonisation steadily continued; but rather than take any risks by lending to its own industrialists, the *grande bourgeoisie* preferred to become the banker of Europe.

These wealthy men were further upset by the emergence of the Second International, created by the Paris Congress of 1889. The following year the workers celebrated their first May Day by an impressive demonstration, during the course of which they demanded the eight-hour day as a matter of right.

In spite of all repression the movement made rapid progress, because the effects of universal suffrage were making themselves felt. The obvious defects of the parliamentary system however, resulted in prolonged strikes and in anarchistic ideas which were logically followed by political crimes.

A strike at Carmaux went on for months, thanks to the encouraging response for public subscriptions. The glass-makers of this town were determined that the secretary of their syndicate should keep his seat in the *conseil d'arrondissement*, for unlike the anarchists they recognized the value of parliamentary institutions and electoral reforms.

When it finally ended, it resulted in the election of a Socialist deputy—Jean Jaurès, who was to devote the rest of his life to the cause of the under dog.

The syndicalists on the other hand pinned all their faith on the General Strike, this doctrine being emphasised by Aristide Briand at the Congress at Marseilles. The idea of the General Strike made rapid headway due to parliamentary corruption, and to the patent fact that the powerful industrialists were always in a position to dictate their terms to the docile governments.

Ministries rose and fell with sickening monotony, but the situation itself remained fundamentally unchanged. The futile bomb throwing of Vaillant, followed by the threats hurled against Sidi-Carnot, the insipid President, did no good to the workers, but succeeded in strengthening the hands of their opponents.

In the 1893 elections a large percentage of the middle classes abstained from voting, the result being a noticeable swing to the extreme left. News of the activities of the Russian terrorists, coupled with outrages like those of Vaillant and of the Italian Caserio, confirmed the *bourgeoisie* in its mistaken belief that all leftist activities were of foreign origin and criminal in their tendencies.

The protest of Jaurès who declared in the Chamber that genuine Socialists repudiated such crimes, did little to calm the middle class public, and the authorities were not slow to make a profitable use of these legitimate resentments.

When Casimir Périer was elected President, it was proposed that new and specially rigorous laws—*lois scélérates*—should be passed against the anarchists. But the left wingers promptly rebelled against these measures, and the opposition became more effective when there was a partial union between the Radicals and the Socialists.

Democratic progress was so rapid, that many intelligent individuals were unable to follow the swift course of events. The Radical-Socialist party wanted a vigorous fiscal policy, while the syndicalists would have nothing but their General Strike; but in spite of these contradictory and confusing tendencies to which personal jealousies and ambitions added not a little, the teachings of men like Guesde, Lafargue, Jaurès, were beginning to bear fruit.

One concrete result of their tireless propaganda was the enforced resignation of Casimir Périer, one of the big

shareholders in the Anzan mines. He was succeeded by the moderate Félix Faure, and it was during his term of office that Zola aroused public interest in the Dreyfus Affair with his dramatic *J'Accuse* in the paper: *L'Aurore*. In an exclusive interview granted to M. Beer in December 1897, Zola declared:

"You see, many of the rich Jews and Jewesses hate me as much as the Nationalists or the Catholic bigots do for my defence of Dreyfus. They believe that, in defending Dreyfus, I am betraying my country; they don't see that I am really defending the France of the French Revolution, the real beginning of French patriotism. Only a few days ago a great Jewish lady actually insulted M. Anatole France for supporting me by signing the petition for the revision of the Dreyfus trial. Fancy Anatole France charged with lack of patriotism! [It's grotesque!] But I am glad that the Jewish intellectuals are on our side."

The flood of hate and anger let loose by the Affair, served in the end to strengthen the forces which were fighting so bravely for freedom and progress. In 1895 the Syndicalists formed the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, soon to be known as the C.G.T.; while left wingers of all shades, having realized the danger of a military *coup* formed a *comité d'entente*, in an effort to unite all the socialist parties.

Jaurès was obsessed by the idea of unity. He was personally convinced that scientific socialism offered the only rational solution of the labour problem, but he was large hearted enough not to attempt a forcible conversion of those who disagreed. His attempted fusion would have been entirely commendable in the case of a powerful firmly established party; under the existing circumstances however it became a hindrance to the movement, because of the inevitable clash between the various ideologies.

The President who had been a consistent anti-Dreyfusard, died unexpectedly in 1899 and was succeeded by the left winger; Emile Loubet. The funeral ceremony was marred by frantic demonstrations. Déroulède attempted to launch an attack against the Palais de l'Elysée at the head of a regiment, and the sky of Paris was once again rent by different slogans: *Vive la République, Vive l'armée.*

The victory of the Dreyfusards made it abundantly clear that a struggle of this kind was sure to strengthen the democratic cause, because the progressive elements would take up the challenge as soon as they scented a threat to the Republic.

The forces let loose helped the Socialists, who denounced more and more emphatically the rôle of the industrialists in the international *cartels*. A clever person like Waldeck-Rousseau could not ignore the danger; nor would he attempt to overcome the menace by anything so futile as physical repression.

On the contrary, he waxed eloquent over the necessity of internal peace, declared a truce with labour and offered a portfolio in his government to Alexandre Millerand,—a working class leader.

He had made his choice with consummate skill, for Millerand, one of the most ambitious and intriguing of men, fell easily in line with his capitalist employers.

The inclusion in Waldeck-Rousseau's cabinet of General Gallifet who had cruelly persecuted the Communards in 1871, did nothing to increase the popularity of this Socialist. But this was not all; it did much to lessen the faith of the workers in parliamentary institutions, and confirmed them in the belief that a constitutional redress of their numerous grievances was virtually impossible.

Their suspicions however were not entirely justified, for Millerand who tried to imitate Louis Blanc, was responsible for the creation of a labour department in the Ministry of Commerce. Other pro-labour laws were also passed, but these measures did nothing to allay the discontent of the sceptics; the controversy therefore went on interminably till August 1904, when the Sixth Congress of the Socialist and Labour International met at Amsterdam "to give its final decision on the question of ministerialism."

In his "Fifty Years of International Socialism", Beer gives an interesting account of the proceedings of this Congress:

"The left wing Socialists submitted a resolution, which originated in Germany, condemning ministerialism, and calling upon the organized Socialist and Labour movement to guide its policy by the principle of the opposition of interest between

Capital and Labour. The left wing leader was Jules Guesde; his opponent was Jean Jaurès, who argued that in a democracy a great deal could be achieved for the welfare of Labour by a reformist policy, and that a too strict adherence to the class struggle theory led to political sterility."

Later on in the same essay, "Reform or Revolution", Beer says: "M. Vanderville summed up the whole debate in a masterly fashion, and asked for the vote to be taken. The result was a foregone conclusion. The Revolutionists obtained a large majority."

But the majority notwithstanding, the mischief was done. France seemed to be suffering from an invincible political lethargy, which is hardly surprising when one goes through the membership list of the Second International, which counted among its workers people like Jaurès, Rosa Luxembourgh, Bernard Shaw, but which also, alas, welcomed Pilsudski and Mussolini, Ramsay MacDonald, Laval!

Socialism became the chief item in the programme of every unscrupulous intriguer, because the people had by now acquired such an intense class consciousness that an ambitious individual without money or connections, could not hope to win advancement without their active support.

The upper middle classes, united by business and social ties to the old aristocracy, were having the time of their lives, while the unknown millions were being led by their friends, duped by their foes. The new century had already dawned and the sky was thick with menacing clouds, but these favoured ones were happy, and because they were happy were firmly convinced that everything was perfect in the best of all worlds.

The doctrines of anarchism and syndicalism with their implications of violence were looked upon with abhorrence by the *petite bourgeoisie*, while the members of this class were despised by the workers as petty minded arrivistes.

This conflict was a godsend to the overlords, and the government of Waldeck-Rousseau-Gallifet-Millerand remained in power for three whole years—an unprecedented event in the history of the Republic. As usual they would have liked to divert popular attention into anti-clerical channels, but the workers were no longer deceived by this ruse, and the following resolution was passed by the Congress of Issoudun

in 1902: "In the anti-clerical sentiments which the governing classes have been exhibiting for some time, the French labour party recognizes a new capitalist manoeuvre to distract the workers from their struggle against economic servitude."

The lower middle classes however, helped by their more well to do compatriots, spent ten long years fighting against clerical domination; years of passionate controversies and unrelenting struggle. Though a great deal of this energy was wasted, the results in the long run were certainly beneficial for the Government having encouraged the dispute, was obliged to legalise political bodies and kindred associations.

Anti-clericalism assumed such important proportions for the middle classes, that it ended by bringing their party into power.

The Radical Party led by Emile Combes, came into the limelight in 1902. Far from breaking with the big financiers it kept Rouvier—agent of the Rothschilds—in the Government but at the same time it adopted a more benevolent attitude towards the workers and their demands.

As everybody expected, it introduced a series of far reaching measures relating to the Church. Education was secularised, the French ambassador left the Vatican, and even when Emile Combes resigned to make way for Rouvier, a law was prepared to abolish the Concordat created by Napoleon.

When this law was finally passed, it was a day of rejoicing for all the anti-clerical elements, because it guaranteed the separation of the Church from the State. It was also announced that an inventory of Church property would soon be made, and the Radicals seemed to win all along the line in the inevitable conflicts which followed these events.

The unification of the Socialist parties had been brought about in 1905, but events were to prove that it was entirely superficial. Briand soon turned his back on them forgetting his syndicalism, and Viviani left the party, being entrusted with the formation of a *Ministère du Travail*.

Opportunism became the watchword of many so-called Socialists, but the anti-clericalism of the middle classes helped the progressive individuals in an unexpected manner. The Pope had forbidden French bishops to sign the declaration demanded by the authorities before a meeting could be conven-

ed, but by the law which was passed in 1907 and which dispensed with this declaration, it was possible to avoid too open a dispute.

In spite of these concessions, there were endless clashes between the authorities and the workers, and a crisis in which the troops of the 17th Infantry Regiment refused to fire on the workers of Béziers, revealed to the Government the extent of the danger.

Briand was put in charge to manage things more tactfully than the reactionary Clemenceau. Repression became less obvious, so that Lenin in Paris could behold with astonishment the popular manifestations against the foreign policy of the Government—which was far less intelligent than its policy at home.

A huge military budget kept accumulating, in accordance with the wishes of the manufacturers of arms. Imperialism was having its inevitable consequences and Europeans were having the jitters every day, living in a state of ceaseless alarm.

When the Agadir incident blew over, the people of France heaved a sigh of relief. Pacifism and Socialism seemed to be on the increase, but the people wanted peace without understanding the causes of war in modern society. As for socialism—it had entered an idealistic phase in which the teachings of Guesde and Lafargue found but a feeble echo; even the C. G. T. was developing a working class *bourgeoisie*, and the failure of several strikes one after the other, reduced the masses to impotent despair.

1914—1918

In June 1914 there were a hundred and four Socialist Deputies in the Chamber, but the following month it was Jaurès who, with Marcel Cachin and a few others made a last minute effort to stave off the war. A few hours later he was murdered by a Royalist.

As far back as 1904, this grand old fighter had asked Beer: "What would be the attitude of German Social Democracy in the event of a war between Germany and France?" to which the latter replied: "They would march as one man. The German Party has no power whatever to influence German policy, and somehow does not really try to change the

Constitution in such a manner as to give the people an effective share in the government."

The prediction was justified. During the days which immediately preceded the 3rd August, the German syndicates and those of the Allied nations indulged in a lot of mutual recrimination, but when war was finally declared, the Socialists of all countries vied with each other in voting military credits to their respective governments. A few days later everyone was talking of loyalty and civilization, of freedom and justice.

Not that these high sounding words were false or meaningless. True that Germany continued to be supplied with vital materials, including cotton, through the neutral countries; true that Krupps supplied the *Comité des Forges* through Switzerland with 250,000 tons of steel every month, in return for which favour the gentlemen in the *Comité* extracted from the High Command a solemn assurance that they would not bomb the Briey region which was occupied by the Germans—; when all this has been said, it yet remains a fact that the defeat of Imperial Germany was indispensable if humanity wished to progress, if the fight for freedom was not to come to an end.

England and France had evolved a system of parliamentary democracy which, with all its shortcomings, provided the people with a platform from which to carry on the fight against tyranny and oppression. The struggle was comparatively easier in England, protected by the sea from foreign attacks; in France it had become a bitter, protracted, seemingly endless dispute since the days of the Revolution.

But the very ferocity of the repression was a measure of the success which had already been achieved. The French democrat, the man in the street, had developed a sense of his own importance and dignity which the fiercest reactionaries could not afford to despise. In his life of Thomas Paine, Chapman Cohen says:

"One thing the Revolution did give to France. It wiped away for ever existing feudal rights. It gave France an independent peasant population which has remained until this day, and it has bequeathed to the French people a sense of social equality, and of personal independence that is today

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e of the surest hopes for the survival of . . . democracy in rope."

Such was not the case with Germany. As far back as 1849, when Jaurès had exclaimed: "Mais quoi, haven't the Germans got universal suffrage and a parliament?" M. Beerl replied: "No, they have not got a real parliament; manhood suffrage in Germany is not a democratic measure at all, but an Imperial device to give a certain political unity to the various autonomous states of the Reich. The real power is vested in the German Emperor and in his Government, whose decrees and bills must become law, no matter what the Reichstag thinks or how it votes.—The Reichstag is merely a safety valve for the propensities of the nation to theoretic criticism; it is the simulacrum of a parliament. Prince Bismarck after his dismissal by the Kaiser, regretted having firmly placed the Hohenzollerns in the saddle, and admonished the Germans to strengthen the Reichstag. But it was too late".

The victory of such a politically undeveloped race would have been an unmitigated disaster for the cause of democracy over the world. The ordinary men and women of France knew this instinctively, or if they did not, they knew at any rate that they were being attacked once more by the identical enemy who, forty years ago had ravaged their land.

When we think of the *poilu*, the unknown soldier who fought so bravely, a recent example in literature claims our whole-hearted admiration. Marcel Detaze, the French painter of Upton Sinclair's World's End Series, who loved beauty above all things, may or may not be a fictitious character; but he is a perfect example of the disinterested patriot who sacrificed everything in life, joined up in the air force, and had his face blown off, and yet went off to the trenches a second time, when the Germans were threatening to break through at Verdun.

His argument was simple: this ghastly mask, he said, cannot prevent me from fighting or holding a gun. He left his body—mask and all—in the trenches in which millions of soldiers had been rotting for months. They had fought valiantly for years, but at Verdun they rose to such heights of sacrifice and heroism, as will bear repeated telling for generations to come.

In the meanwhile there were the others: the "important" men, the industrialists, the financiers who made fortune out of human misery, stayed at home and thundered patriotic speeches, reviled and persecuted the few brave men like Romain Rolland and Barbusse who dared to tell the truth, the simple revolting truth about the realities of the war.

The Socialists, however, had discovered their mistake quite early in the day. In 1915, a French delegation which met Lenin at Zimmerwald, had declared that "this war is result of capitalist antagonisms; it will not eliminate the cause of future conflicts; a durable peace under the capitalist system is nothing but a dream."

Of course there was a hue and cry everywhere; many honest people sincerely considered such words to be the ravings of lunatics, but the most indignant of all were the drawing room patriots who had everything to gain by a prolongation of the conflict.

The word *patrie* was on everyone's lips, only it meant different things to different men. For the *poilu* as for the Tommy, it meant his home and his children, the soil which he loved; for the "important" people it meant secret treaties and intrigues, millions of francs.

For three long years the war was fought on these contradictory principles, and not till America joined in the fray was a serious effort made to enforce the blockade. It meant at the end of course to much comfortable profit making, but this sacrifice had become necessary, due to the unexpected turn in international events.

The Bolshevik Revolution raised screams of anger in the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*, which had worries in plenty to keep it busy at home. The squabbles among the Allied High Commands aggravated the dangers of an already dangerous situation; labour troubles, troubles in the army broke out everywhere, reaching a climax when an attempt was made to fill the war factories with Americans, and to send most of the French workers to the horrors of the front.

Things became so serious that the C.G.T. itself was obliged to intervene; repression was intensified both at home and at the front, and most people had no idea when or how

the situation would be stabilised, when the collapse of Germany decided the issue—for the moment at least.

1918—1944

The Russian Revolution marks the definite beginning of the "International Civil War" which has yet to be won; for to this epoch making event, more than to any other single factor in world politics, may be traced the growth of Fascism which grew from strength to strength, with the active support of the Allied governments.

To save the German *bourgeoisie*, the defeated country was allowed to keep its Reichswehr, not to mention the civic guard composed of 400,000 men. Already, when the Weimar Republic was yet in its infancy, England had declared that these forces were necessary to save respectable Germans from the horrors of Bolshevism; and the method of starving "undesirable" elements was used with such success that a number of revolutions were nipped in the bud.

In France, relations with the Holy See were re-established and the Church became, as after Waterloo, a force to be reckoned with. The upper classes were determined to stop at nothing to retain their power, and from their point of view the situation was fraught with the most dangerous possibilities.

There was, for example, the Socialist Congress of Strasburg which openly flirted with the idea of the French Party joining the newly created International. There was an important railway strike in February 1920; but the climax came in April of the same year when another strike affected miners, workers in the textile, metallurgical and building industries, as well as scores of men who were employed in the dockyards.

The French aspect of the International Civil War was now in full swing. In the deadly struggle which ensued, both sides had their moments of triumph and of defeat. The strikes were crushed and political desertions became more common than ever; on the other hand, the governing classes met with nothing but disappointment in their countless efforts to crush the Soviet Republic, while at the Socialist Congress of Tours in 1920, a large majority of the delegates decided to recognize

the Third International, and formed the French Communist Party.

From 1922 onwards, the French national debt increased out of all proportion, reaching the colossal figure of 35 milliard francs in 1935. Strict customs duties affected foreign trade so adversely that it fell from 108 milliard francs to 3 milliard francs in a period of ten years. French industries were directly concerned with about thirty international organisations. A few big financial bodies decided all important questions, and friends of well-known politicians found it remarkably easy to gain access to these trusts.

After a period of fictitious prosperity, the economic crisis became, round about 1930, an integral part of the national life, with danger signals in plenty—unemployment, a severe breakdown in agricultural prices, a rapidly falling birth rate.

The Stavisky scandal seemed to threaten for a moment the very existence of the Republic. The Royalists of the *Action Française*, headed by Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet, had the time of their lives with their anti-Republican propaganda. According to them a crowned head was all that was needed. Give France a king and everything would be settled: the recurrent crises, the inherent contradictions of an antiquated system.

The riots which broke out in Paris—riots in which both Reds and Royalists participated freely, the excitement, the frenzy, were strongly reminiscent of the hectic days when Dreyfus and Boulanger had monopolized the attention of the public.

Wild words were uttered, wild deeds committed; but from the rioting, the quarrelling, the accusations and counter accusations, one fact emerged: the great majority of French citizens would have nothing but a Republic.

From now on, progressive individuals of all parties realized the necessity of closing their ranks, of presenting a united front to the enemies of mankind. Peasants, artisans, intellectual all those who valued the marvellous achievements of European civilization since the time of the Renaissance, knew they would have to fight as one man, before the Fascist monster could be finally defeated and laid in his grave.

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Maurice Thorez, the Communist leader, was one of the many fine men who laboured to this end. The union of the different left wing parties begun in 1905 would present many difficulties, and would bear its finest fruits only during the horrors of the German occupation; but the immense consciousness of the people was evident everywhere, and most particularly in the revival of syndicalism, which succeeded in acquiring about five million adherents.

But it could not, alas, prevent the onward march of triumphant fascism. The people, the fighters of all countries looked on helplessly as the Japanese hordes overran peaceful territories, just as they were powerless to stop the military feats of the Duce's Black Shirts.

But the gravest crisis came with Franco's attack on the government of Spain. It was so obviously in the national interests of France to prevent both Germans and Italians from gaining a foothold in that country, that the behaviour of the ruling minorities would be difficult to explain, were it not for the obvious fact that class interests and the class war had become far more important than everything else.

Léon Blum, who had been swept into power in 1936 by the Alliance of the workers and the *petite bourgeoisie*, (the Popular Front Alliance), did everything he could to help the Republicans; but he was submerged and overwhelmed by his countless enemies both in France and outside, who made the maximum use of his Jewish nationality to discredit his efforts. He was a gentleman and an intellectual who adored Proust, who had liberal ideas about the institution of marriage, who wanted to introduce decent living conditions for the workers of his country, but who was caught in the grip of the most ruthless gangsterism which the world had yet devised.

And so the farce of non-intervention dragged on wearily, relieved only by the magnificent loyalty of the people of all countries, who refused to be bullied into abandoning their comrades. Those who fought for the Republic without being obliged to do so, have won the eternal gratitude of all freedom loving men. Writers like André Malraux, Louis Aragon, Hemingway, whose hero has passed into literature; characters like Alfy, the English aristocrat, who fictitious though he may be is so typical of scores of splendid young volunteers, have made it possible for the struggle to continue right down to our

day. It is due to them and to their brothers in Spain, that the days of Franco are drawing to an end.

From Spain to Munich and September 1939, was a foregone conclusion. Many stories have been written, many explanations given to account for the disaster of June 1940, but only one thing is important: the manner in which the people of France reacted to the defeat.

The Fighting French troops under General de Gaulle, the men and women of the Resistance, the soldiers of the Maquis have added unforgettable pages to the glory of France. Drawn from all ranks of society, from all walks of life, they were composed of patriotic *curés*, of technicians, of professors, of authors like Duhamel, Mauriac, Aragon, like the brilliant young Prévost who was killed by the Germans with a Montaigne in his hands.

They have given the lie to the enemies of freedom, who had proclaimed so loudly that both France and democracy were rotten to the core. They have given new life to their country, new hope to the race.

IX

AFTER THE LIBERATION

THE Tenth Congress of the French Communist Party which was held in Paris in June 1945, discussed at length the important question of working class unity. The idea was that the Communist and Socialist Parties should be fused into one big body known as the *Parti Ouvrier Français* which would be both national and international, and which would wage a relentless war against capitalist exploitation and racial prejudice.

It was emphasised that the Party would "freely determine its policies, would not be dominated by any external force whatsoever; and would remain completely independent in its relations with foreign governments and the government of France." The resolution which expressed the conviction that the Socialist Congress would undoubtedly discuss the above mentioned proposals, concluded by declaring:

"The achievement of working class unity is the terror of the big trusts, the terror of Vichy agents who will do everything they can to postpone it. But it is the great hope of the French nation, and as far as we are concerned, we are determined to do everything in our power to see that this hope is realized."*

Many Socialists agreed with the Communist viewpoint. André Blumel, a member of the Socialist Party, wrote:

"One big working class party will achieve its aim—the emancipation of the workers—far more effectively than a fraction which, although it may not be negligible, will be limited in its scope. It is evident that after a certain time the new Party will absorb both Socialists and Communists, just as the union of 1905 destroyed in a few years the distinction between Guesdistes and Jauresistes. The stream cannot reach the sea, unless it passes through the river."

The proposal, however, was not accepted by the Socialist Congress, (August 1945) presided over by Léon Blum, who received a tumultuous ovation. The Secretary of the Party, Daniel Mayer, discussing the Socialist objections to the proposed unity, referred to the respective attitudes of the two parties in their relations with Russia.

"The sentimental attachment of the Communists (to the U.S.S.R.) has been justified by the results achieved since the Revolution of 1917, and particularly by the immense hope to which the Revolution gave rise. But the U.S.S.R. has its own national interests. There is undoubtedly much in common between the two working classes, but the coincidence of interests is not always automatic. We wish to reserve the right to cry: 'Attention!' to the Soviet Government if the necessity arises. When will we make up our minds on this subject? When the U.S.S.R. becomes an integral part of the international community, or when we see a modification of the ties which bind the Communists of France to the Soviet Republic. There is also the moral argument: the temperamental difference between Socialists and Communists. The Communists accept *en bloc* everything that comes from the Central Committee; the Socialists—more democratic—argue and discuss."

* Action 5th August 1945. Quoted in the "Presse de France"—15th August 1945.

The Socialists put forward their own plan for unity. "In the first phase of the Communo-Socialist entente which would last till the elections, there should be unity of action as in the 1936 alliance. The Committee created in November 1944 to bring about the unity of the two parties, should therefore meet without delay to fix a programme for the electoral campaign. During the second phase, following the elections, the Committee would meet again to devise ways and means to bring about unity of action and complete organic unity. This goal could be achieved if the two parties agreed on the following points: complete doctrinal probity and absolute respect for democratic rules, most particularly respect for individual liberties and direct secret suffrage, coupled with an unswerving devotion to the cause of labour, unhindered by dependence of any kind whatsoever on a foreign government."^{*}

Although the official unity of these two important parties has not yet been achieved, it is no exaggeration to say that there exists a tacit unofficial determination not to get in each other's way. During the proceedings of the Socialist Congress, André Philippe, Deputy for the Rhone District, declared:

"Let us see what unites us. We are two working class parties, called upon to solve the same problems. No matter how critical we may be of Communist policies, the opposition between us will not be insurmountable."

During the proceedings of the National Constituent Assembly (13th November 1945) the Socialist Vincent Auriol declared: "What is it that separates us from the Popular Republican Movement? A certain anxiety about its spiritual and particularly about its educational ideas ... and what separates us from the Communist Party? Not so much a question of doctrine, as a question of method and tactics, and particularly a state of mind."[§]

This mutual tolerance is hardly surprising, when one remembers the glorious rôle played by both the parties in the Resistance Movement. The murder of the Socialist Max Dormoy was preceded by the arrest of Léon Blum. Purging itself of all undesirable elements, the party clandestinely reformed itself, and carried the fight to a victorious conclusion.

^{*} Quoted in the "Nouvelles de France."

[§] Journal Officiel No. 5—14th November 1945.

The 900,000 members of the Communist Party made a gigantic contribution, and if their collective efforts are considered, they can claim perhaps to have suffered the most in the struggle for freedom.

It is therefore inconceivable that these men who fought side by side throughout the German occupation, can indulge in the mutual recriminations, the petty squabbles which often ruined their work in the pre-war years.

As far back as 1942, General de Gaulle has declared: "This war is a revolution." In the speech he delivered on the eve of the elections, he said:

"As the situation improves we shall be able to introduce new reforms. But we have already begun, and there will be no going back on certain essential measures which have been passed. Politically we have given the vote to women. In the social sphere we have created a number of committees, every worker a certain share in the direction of the factory. We have nationalised the coal mines in the Pas de Calais and in the North. We have overhauled the whole machinery of social security, settled the compensation rates in case of accidents or death, and associated the insured workers with the management of the funds created for their benefit.

"From the administrative point of view, we have created a national school freely open on equal terms to all young Frenchmen, in order to unify and improve the system of recruiting candidates for public offices, and to guide in their careers those who will be called upon to shoulder the difficult and honourable task of serving the State."

These important and far reaching measures have been passed in a land which has barely emerged from the worst disaster in its history. The energy and determination with which the French have undertaken the task of reconstruction, have given the world one more proof of their amazing vitality. But they are not content to rest on their laurels. As General de Gaulle said:

"In order to reconstruct and modernise our dear and beautiful country much remains to be done — But we shall see. Yes! We shall see that we are always right when we place our trust in the people of France."

If he trusts the people of France, they in their turn have full confidence in his leadership. His first election as head of the Provisional Government was unanimous. After the crisis created by the Communist demand for one of the key ministries, 400 members of the National Constituent Assembly as against 163 decided that "President de Gaulle should continue the negotiations to form in the shortest possible time a government composed essentially of the three parties, with the Socialists, Communists, and Popular Republicans equally sharing the portfolios and carrying out the programme of the *Conseil National de la Résistance*."*

The elections contested separately by the three chief parties have their lessons to teach. The Socialist gains in the cantonal elections turned out to be temporary, and the Communists stood first with 151 seats.

The excellent show put up by the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* was rather unexpected, since it doubled its vote in the short space of a month.† A number of the older parties have practically ceased to exist, because they failed to keep up with the spirit of the times. If the elections have proved anything, they have made it clear that no reactionary organization stands the ghost of a chance in the France of today.

French opinion today almost unanimously desires the nationalisation of key industries, intelligent planning in the interests of the people, a drastic overhauling of the national structure without a wholesale rejection of what was good in the old order. In the words of Monsieur André Philippe: "all the parties which have been successful in the elections, have expressed their determination to bring about radical changes, to nationalise the big industries, to introduce a new financial, political, social and colonial policy which will express the will and aspirations of our nation."†

It is difficult to predict the exact nature of the new Constitution, but it seems certain that public opinion will

* Journal Officiel No. 6—20th November 1945.

§ It is said that women voters were largely responsible for this sudden change in the fortunes of the Party. If this is true, it is easy to understand why the essentially anti-clerical Third Republic always refused to give the vote to women.

† Journal Officiel No. 6—20th November 1945.

demand a far greater degree of stability than characterised the governments of the pre-war Republic.

But if the swing to the left is too pronounced to be questioned, there is less unanimity of opinion on several other points. The elections revealed, for example, that 13,224,753 persons favoured and 6,613,630 were opposed to the idea of granting wide powers to the Government during the Constitution making period; while 19,081,808 French citizens as against 800,884, wished that the work of drafting this Constitution should be entrusted to one Chamber.

The emphasis is not so much on personalities as on programmes. All the parties are essentially national, and judging by the happy solution of the grave differences which threatened to create a major crisis, it can safely be assumed that their first loyalty is to France.

The distribution of seats is in keeping with the traditions of parliamentary democracy: the Communists form the strongest single party, but they would be immediately defeated if the Socialists joined hands with the left wing Catholics.

The indications are that all three parties, led by a patriot like General de Gaulle, will get on reasonably well in the newly created Republic. Communists, Socialists and Catholics have suffered too much, contributed too generously to the common cause, understood too well the supreme importance of national reconstruction, to drift apart irrevocably in the critical years which will follow the war.

And if ever the liberties for which they have sacrificed so freely are threatened, by enemies at home or abroad, it is not too presumptuous to suppose that they will fight together in the future, as they have fought in the past.

CONCLUSION

If the years between the two wars have proved anything, they have made it clear that political independence is utterly valueless, unless it is accompanied by personal liberty.

Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, Hirohito's Japan, were politically independent and were first class world powers in the most complete sense of the word; yet it is no exaggera-

tion to say that for the people enslaved by those detestable tyrannies, the word freedom was a myth.

After six years of the most disastrous war in history, it has become a commonplace to maintain that democracy, in the 20th century, must be social in character.

Antiquated systems are being everywhere rejected, because the tortured peoples of Europe have understood this truth. And when these millions and millions of human beings have had time to recover from their unspeakable sufferings, when they are governed by the men who led them to victory, when they can work and eat as a matter of right—they will prove again to the world what European civilization is capable of achieving.

APPENDICES

I

HOW FRANCE HAS BEEN GOVERNED SINCE THE TIME OF THE ROMANS

It has often been said that a country gets the government it deserves; a sweeping assertion containing a grain of truth, since governments and constitutions are the product of the people, and have never been received as a gift from heaven.

But a government is composed of individuals; constitutions are drawn up by fallible human beings, swayed by motives both noble and ignoble. To understand therefore the administrative documents and institutions of a country, it is necessary to have at least a general idea of the several factors which have played their part in moulding what is known as the national character.

The case of France is particularly complicated. With the exception of Russia it is the largest country in Europe, and one on which Nature has lavished her gifts. It can be reached both by land and sea, and its riches have been coveted by greedy neighbours from the beginning of its history. No country perhaps has been invaded so often, but on the other hand, no country probably has assimilated so well its would-be conquerors.

The French people of today are therefore a mixture of several races: Gauls, Romans, Greeks, Ligurians, Celts, Phoenicians, Iberians. More than any other single factor, the influence of Rome was responsible for welding these different groups into a homogeneous unit; but the descendants of the various races have often preserved their own peculiarities, and it is to this fact that one may trace many of the contradictions and inconsistencies which appear to be a part of the Frenchman's character.

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This then is the raw material from which has evolved the civilization of France, and as no civilization can flourish for long without an orderly government, the student of French history is interested in finding out how these people have been governed since the time of the Romans.

When the country was united under the Merovingian dynasty, the king sent a governor—furnished with the Roman title of *comte*—to the different cities. The rôle of this *comte* whose authority was reinforced by an armed escort was to preserve order, collect taxes, recruit new soldiers and lead them into battle in the service of the king. These *comtes* were so useful to the ruler who could not possibly be everywhere, that they continued to function even under Charlemagne, when the Merovingian glory was a thing of the past.

The unity achieved by Clovis did not outlast his death, and in a short time the country was split up into independent states. The dynasty was finally overthrown by Pépin, to whose son Charlemagne, the country owed a new period of prosperity with a strong centralized administration, the details of which are to be found in the collection of ordinances, instructions and projects known as the *Capitulaires*.

If the ruler's power was as unlimited as that of the Roman emperor's, it was exercised in a totally different manner. The civilizing influence of Rome had accustomed the people to the idea of obeying officials who represented a distant and impersonal government; with the break up of the Roman Empire, however, it was no longer possible to impose a rule on the country without the personal intervention of a chief, representing in his own person the most absolute supremacy.

The centre of all activity was naturally the palace, and the highest nobles in the land vied with each other in ministering to the needs of the all powerful Charlemagne.

A huge domestic staff came into existence, under the direction of four important chiefs: the *sénéchal* who looked after the table, the *bouteiller* or *échanson* who supervised the cellars, the *camérier* whose duties were confined to the ruler's clothes and provisions, and lastly the *comestabulie* (*comte de l'écurie, connétable*) who was in charge of the stables.

As the nobles were both illiterate and contemptuous of learning, all business which had to be transacted in writing

was confided to a staff of ecclesiastics, the head of the department being known as the *Chancelier*. This was the origin of the modern *Chancellerie*.

Before taking an important decision, the Emperor consulted the men—*conseillers*—whose opinion and judgment he respected, and this practice was carried on by all the princes of the Continent.

Charlemagne had the intelligence to realize that a close collaboration between the secular and ecclesiastical powers was absolutely necessary, in order to achieve an enduring stability. He therefore commanded them to pool their forces in the difficult task of maintaining the peace, and to make sure that his instructions were carried out, he ordered a periodical inspection by a *comte* and a bishop.

All the subjects of the Emperor had to pay the *dîme* (the ninth part of the proceeds realized on their crops and sheep) to the priest, and this custom was not abolished till the outbreak of the Revolution. The different parishes were finally organized, and all Frenchmen were placed under the authority of a priest for whose maintenance they were responsible.

In spite of these great achievements however, the same old story of disunity and disruption repeated itself after the Emperor's death, and by the end of the 10th century the feudal system was a firmly established fact.

There was not much of an organized orderly government during the years that followed. When two parties fell out, the king, like his barons, ordered them to fight to settle the dispute. As far as the people were concerned, their quarrels were disposed of by *maires** backed up by armed *sergents* who helped them in their work.

When the villeins of a territory had managed to collect a certain sum of money, the seigneur gave them a charter, by which he undertook not to make demands beyond those which were stated and specified in writing. As a matter of fact, the undertaking was seldom kept, and the poor peasants led insufferable lives between the warlike nobles and the rapacious *maires*.

* They were originally recruited from the peasantry, but after a time it became the practice to pass on the office from father to son.

Of course all the barons were not rotters. Some of them did good work, and Sisley Huddleston mentions with appreciation the bridges they built, the markets they instituted, the fêtes over which they graciously presided. But good or bad, they were a law unto themselves, and the country was not to have a centralized administration till the long drawn out struggle between them and their ruler finally ended in a victory for the king.

Thanks to the conquests of Philippe Auguste, there was a tremendous increase in the royal power. Following the example of Normandy, the king created four officials known as the *baillis*, to deputise for him in four different regions. Similar officials who functioned later on in the west and south came to be known as the *sénéchaux*, and these *baillages* and *sénéchaussées* continued to exist till 1789. The king's agents were drawn from the nobility and fulfilled all the duties of the Carolingian *comtes*, i.e., they were judges, administrators and tax-gatherers, but unlike the *comtes* they depended on the king who could appoint or dismiss them at his own sweet will.

The work begun by Philippe Auguste was carried on by Louis IX, so that by the end of the 13th century the French king was, without doubt, the first ruler of Europe.

The 14th and 15th centuries constitute a period of lengthy transition in medieval history. Feudalism was slowly falling to pieces, but the monarchic state was not yet in a position to replace the old order. The long series of warrior kings was interrupted by a new phenomenon — the appearance of kings like Charles V in the 14th and Louis IX in the 15th centuries who were not content with mere bloodshed, and who had intelligent ideas on the problems of kingship.

All the characteristics, traditions, institutions associated with the *ancien régime* existed already in the 16th century, were developed in the 17th and reached their climax in the 18th century, before they were destroyed by the first great Revolution.

The power of the king was being unfailingly consolidated, thanks to the efforts of Richelieu and Mazarin, and when Louis XIV succeeded to the throne the ground was prepared: in the words of Seignobos, "Mazarin had bequeathed to him a docile nation, highly placed servants, a servile Parliament."

The sayings attributed to Louis XIV: *L'Etat c'est moi*, (I am the State), *C'est légal parce que je le veux*, (It is legal because such is my wish), *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, (One faith, one law, one king), have created the impression that the king's personal will and his will alone was the supreme factor in the administration of France.

Many facts seem to bear out this widely accepted viewpoint. By the end of the 18th century the Communes were no longer entitled to choose their Mayors. The king himself nominated sheriffs and all other officials whose posts were passed on from father to son. Freedom of the press was nothing unheard of, and on those who disapproved of the government, i.e., of the king, the royal hospitality was unstintingly showered—in the cells of the Bastille.

The monarch's method of governing the land was apparently very simple. He summoned to his cabinet the ministers who enjoyed his confidence, listened to their reports, then made up his mind and issued his commands. As a matter of fact, these ministers of bourgeois origin who had been trained in diplomacy by Mazarin knew how to handle the finely appointed sovereign, and although he graciously told their successors: "I will form you as I formed them," most of the decisions he took were skilfully suggested by men like Pomponne and Lionne, Luvois and Colbert.

As far as the detailed administration of the country was concerned, His Majesty graciously permitted a few *conseils* to survive. The *Conseil d'Etat*, whose job it was to draw up the royal ordinances and regulations and to dispose of cases between private individuals and the state, did excellent work and continued to exist right down to our times.

The provinces were administered by intendants of justice, police and finance. The king's authority was so well established that no one dared to disobey his agents who reigned supreme in their domain. But to make sure that they did not develop any false notions about their importance, it was clearly emphasised that the intendant's post was far from being an office; it was only a "commission" conferred by the ruler who could recall the holder whenever he liked.

To these despotic rules there was only one exception: the case of the man who was Chancellor of France. This

was one of the oldest and most honourable of positions, much so that the *Grand Monarque* himself did not dare treat it with too much impunity. The Chancellor who put the royal seal on all judicial, financial and municipal documents was therefore irremovable, and when a Chancellor fell in disgrace he was deprived of the functions of his office, but not of the office itself.

As Rambaud says: "Louis XIV reigned as well governed." Gone were the days when Machiavelli could despise the French monarchy as an "institution subjected to the rule of laws." Gone were the days when a powerful baron could snap his fingers at a troublesome ruler. Of all the king's subjects none were as servile and as tame as the domesticated nobles.

The court etiquette soon went to such fantastic lengths that when Louis XV became king, the ruler who was as much a slave as his courtiers, had no time left over from his social duties to conduct the affairs of the realm. "By the end of the XVIII century," says Rambaud, "he reigned and did not govern. The power which the king wanted to be absolute eluded him to pass into the hands of his favourites and ministers."

Louis XIV had deliberately picked out his ministers from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. He felt that if they were completely unknown when he chose them, they could easily, if he so wished, be sent back to the obscurity from which they had emerged.

The Duc de Saint Simon, arrogant old aristocrat of the *ancien régime*, had characterised the period as a "long reign of the vile bourgeoisie." When the old king died the reaction set in, and the Controller General and the four secretaries of state were replaced by different *Conseils*, the members of which were drawn from the nobility.

The experiment, however, did not last long. In three years the ministers came back, because the aristocratic *conseillers* fought with each other and were often too lazy to attend to their work.

The country from now on was in the hands of a few ministers and about thirty intendants, who belonged to wealthy middle class families.

The idea of the divine right of kings was theoretically as strong as ever, but things were no longer the same since the new king was a blasé weakling influenced by women. For more than fifty years there were unceasing conflicts between the Parliament and the ministers, the former taking full advantage of the old practice of "remonstrances" which had recently been re-established.

These secret remonstrances directed against a royal edict sent to the Parliament to be transcribed in its registers, came more and more frequent, resulting sometimes in wholesale resignations. The resignations were not accepted because the government had no desire to pay back the deposit and it took its revenge by transferring Parliament to an out of the way little town, where the recalcitrant members having nothing to do were overcome with boredom.

But they did not budge an inch from their newly established position. They said that Parliament was "the guardian of the fundamental laws of the kingdom," and expressed the notoriously seditious view that the king and his subjects were bound by a contract. It added that the "prince shut up in his palace could not be aware of the truth"; it claimed that the king was entitled to freely examine the edicts relating to the levying of new taxes since it was, according to its members, the only "representative organ of the nation."

By the time the fifteenth Louis died, the ground was prepared for the events of '89. The king who was a well formed man with a head on his shoulders, knew what was coming. "Après nous le déluge", Madame de Pompadour is reported to have said. "Things will last as long as I do," her favourite declared.

The confusion became worse with Louis XVI who was the last person in the world to handle this crisis. There had never been a clearly drawn demarcation between the different services, and whatever happened the ministers were not responsible except to the king. The following résumé will give the reader a general idea of the manner in which the country was governed on the eve of the Revolution.

Le Conseil du Roi or the Conseil d'Etat. It was called upon to consider several questions, and had different names to suit each occasion. It was subdivided into sections, viz.:

(a) *Le Conseil d'en Haut*, which was also known by several other names. It was composed only of ministers, and later on of men who had no ministry to look after but had received the brevet of *Ministre d'Etat*. The Conseil was convoked according to the royal pleasure, and important ministers were often cold shouldered.

(b) *Le Conseil des Dépêches*. Was put in charge of home affairs, one of its duties being to read the correspondence of the different intendants. More important still, it disposed of all publications which could possibly displease the autocratic monarch.

(c) *Le Conseil de Finances*. Its function was to settle financial questions between the State on the one hand, and individuals or groups of individuals on the other. It came into existence after Fouquet had been disgraced.

The Conseil des Dépêches and the Conseil de Finances were made up of the King who presided, the Chancellor, the Controller General, the Secretaries of State and two or three *Conseillers d'Etat*.

(d) *Le Conseil Privé*. Its chief function was to decide litigation between individuals, and it was closely connected with the other Conseils when Richelieu was in power. With Louis XIV, however, it increasingly tended to form a body by itself. The king's throne was always kept ready, though he rarely attended the meetings which were usually held in the royal palace.

Mention has already been made of the intendants who administered the provinces, of their unlimited powers and their dependence on the king. "By means of this powerful machinery," says Rambaud, "the ruler was able to mould the country—according to his will. There were two aspects of his power which was absolute: the Court and the administration. The Court was created so that the king could be worshipped; the administration was there to enforce his commands."

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONSTITUTIONS

Only when one has an adequate idea of the fantastically despotic nature of the old monarchy, is it possible to understand the full significance of the Revolution.

For the first time it was declared—in the Declaration of the Rights of Man—that sovereign power resided not in one individual but in the nation, and the fact that the high hopes of 1789 were not immediately realized, does not in any way lessen the extreme importance of this revolutionary conception.

The National Assembly. It began its career by making a number of serious mistakes. To begin with, it held its meetings in public. Not only could anyone just walk in and listen to the deliberations, but ordinary citizens began to indulge in noisy demonstrations in connection with the proceedings. People with petitions to make were allowed to move about in the hall where the meetings were held, and the result of this extreme form of democracy was that the Parisian population could freely intimidate the men who were supposed to be in charge of its affairs.

Secondly, they refused to form parties which were denounced as factions, and the electors disdained the British practice of collectively backing up a particular candidate. Such a procedure was quite in keeping with the strongly individualistic tendencies of the French, the idea being that the Assembly should be composed of impartial, honest, patriotic citizens who were supposed to resort to their conscience in order to safeguard the popular interests.

It was obviously impossible to realize this ideal, and it was in these extremely unfavourable conditions that the Assembly hatched out and voted the Constitution.

This was the first written Constitution which France had ever had; many things have happened since then, but this practice, similar to that of the United States of America, has never been abandoned.

The Americans were imitated in yet another manner. Like the Declaration of Independence, the Rights of Man were published at the beginning of the newly framed Constitution. As a document it "had....no judicial value," says Seignobos, "and was only a theoretical expression of the sentiments of the Assembly. As in America, it could not be invoked before a court of law, and its only value lies in the fact that it is a profession of principles."

The Constitution was doomed to failure from the beginning. The hereditary monarchy was preserved, and left with just enough power to become a hotbed of mischief. The Assembly arrogated to itself the legislative power, leaving the king with the executive power and the right to veto a legislative measure.* But the entire framework of the *ancien régime* which had given the sovereign his authority and prestige was completely destroyed, and the Assembly itself, unhindered by a second Chamber, was eternally at variance with the once powerful ruler. "The king," says Rambaud, "succumbed under the attacks of the Assembly, and the Assembly under the illegal pressure of the people of Paris."

The Convention. The first thing it did was to declare the Republic.

During the brief and troubled period of its existence it did splendid work in the field of education, but its administrative record turned out to be a failure. Pending the drawing up of another Constitution, there was only one powerful Assembly which governed the country in the most highhanded manner. The revolutionary army and the revolutionary tribunal, the Committees of Public Safety and Surety, etc., imposed on the country a despotic government strongly reminiscent of the *ancien régime*. It was a bitter disillusionment for the lovers of freedom, and the Constitution of the Year III, or the *Constitution Directoriale*, came into being to rid the country of this unexpected dictatorship.

THE DIRECTOIRE CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III

There was now an elected Parliament composed of two chambers: The *Conseil des Anciens* and the *Conseil des Cinq-cents*. This was the legislative body, the executive power being confided to five Directors, who were elected by the *Conseils*.

It was a typical case of too many cooks spoiling the broth. The five Directors were unable to create a stable administra-

* Louis XVI came to be known as Monsieur Veto.

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tion, and the lack of order exasperated the people who could not eternally be nourished on heroics. Napoleon's *coup*, coming at the psychologically correct moment, proved beyond doubt that democracy is a blessing which requires patient preparation. The people who had drawn up the Declaration of Rights and so given to modern Europe its conception of freedom, had to struggle for years before they hit upon a Constitution which afforded them stability while safeguarding their rights.

These rights, if they had ever existed, ceased to do so as soon as Napoleon Bonaparte appeared on the scene.

CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR VIII

The authors of the *coup* had created three Consuls who were supposed to be in power for a period of ten years. The three, however, were soon reduced to one, and the executive power was vested solely in the brilliant young Corsican who could direct the government and select all officials.

The legislative power was theoretically in the hands of four Assemblies: The *Conseil d'Etat* which prepared the laws, the *Tribunat* which discussed them, the *Corps Legislatif* which voted them and the *Sénat* which decided whether they were "in conformity with the Constitution."

But the once powerful Assemblies were reduced to mere shadows, as the one time Consul blossomed forth into an Emperor. They were no longer elected by the people, and the members were transformed into docile "yes" men who voted for laws without daring to discuss them. The *Tribunat* which was supposed to have done so was abolished in 1807, and the Senate was so completely dominated by the imperious Emperor that its first protest was heard on the day of his downfall.

"A more extraordinary conception of government has never been seen," says Sisley Huddleston. "The Legislative Body was an Assembly of dumb persons. It was tongueless and eyeless, and was only permitted to have ears in order that it should obey.—Each succeeding Revolutionary team had devoured the preceding team, and despotism had come out of it all."

But if Napoleon's government was despotic, it was certainly efficient. Lack of space prevents us from going into details, but it can safely be said that he created a strong centralized administration with officials in the modern sense of the word, who were "docile instruments of the central power."

The Constitutional Charter (1815-1848). This Charter succeeded in avoiding the most glaring drawbacks of the previous Constitutions. The Parliament was made up of two Chambers; the monarchy was hereditary, and although the king was invested with complete executive power, it was taken for granted that he should do his job with the help of his ministers.

What could have been an excellent system, failed like the others, this time on account of the limited franchise. Only the fiftieth part of the population was entitled to vote, since the voter had to pay a minimum tax of 300 francs, and the Revolution of 1848 was largely due to the obstinacy of Louis Philippe and Guizot who refused to consider any change in the rolls.

Even while it functioned, there were violent disputes in this Restoration Parliament. Following the English custom, the reactionaries who detested the very name of the Revolution were given their seats on the right of the President. The friends of the Charter constituted the Right and Left Centre. The upholders of the Revolution were placed on the left of the President, and there they remained, no matter what happened. Here the French custom differed from the British usage; "in France the parties always remained in the same place, the adversaries of the Revolution on the Right and the liberals on the Left, so much so that the terms Right and Left took on a permanent political significance."* Unlike the British who believed in two strong permanent parties, the French Chamber was split up into several sections, so that a majority could be obtained only by a coalition of a number of groups.

After the Revolution of 1830, the Constitution was merely revised. Louis Philippe became king by the grace of God and the national will. The suffrage was enlarged, and the elec

* "Histoire sincère de la Nation Française"—Charles Seignobos.

torate now consisted of over two hundred thousand persons, as those who paid a tax of 200 francs were entitled to vote.

The Constitution of 1848. The President was elected by universal suffrage. He could not be re-elected, and he shared with the Chamber the right to initiate new laws during the term of his office. The legislative power was again invested in a single Assembly, thus repeating the mistake of 1791. The President, Louis Napoleon who was independent of the legislature, found himself in inevitable conflict with it, but unlike Louis XVI, it was he who won.

Having been elected directly by the people and not by Parliament, Louis Napoleon claimed to represent two million Frenchmen, as against each individual deputy who was elected by only a few thousands. He took the fullness of his initial mistake. The Constitution was liquidated. The representatives of the people were liquidated. Louis Napoleon found herself the possessor of a brand new Empire.

The Constitution of 1852. There was not much to choose between the Constitution of the Second Empire and that of the First. There was only one legislative body elected by universal suffrage but with no powers to talk of, while the members of the Senate who were supposed to be in charge of public liberties were models of docility. Things went on like this, till public agitation and the War of 1870 gave to the French the most durable of their republican constitutions.

The Constitution of 1875. Of the Third Republic and its Constitution, Ramsey Muir says: "After her many experiments, France at last found her way, in 1875, to a stable system of democratic government. Born amid the humiliation of defeat, it was not inspired by the enthusiasm or the confidence of 1790 or 1848. It was a makeshift, a compromise. Perhaps that is why it lasted: it did not represent the victory of a single school of thought."

The British model was imitated as far as possible, and the country was given a two-chamber Parliament. The Senate was elected by municipal delegates and other holders of local office, the Chamber of Deputies by universal suffrage. Both houses combined in Congress to elect the President (term of office, seven years) and although in theory he was invested

with full executive powers, it was an understood fact that he should listen to his ministers and act on their advice.

Like the British Cabinet, the Council of Ministers "was made jointly and severally responsible to the Chamber of Deputies" who had complete control over the purse-strings of the nation.

There was one difference, however, between the British system and the administrative machinery of pre-war France; there were no independent elected local authorities, as the prefects were more powerful than the mayors of the Communes. The prefects of the various departments, appointed by the government in Paris, had a host of subordinates and ruled supreme in their domain.

By controlling this huge machinery—the steel frame of France which was created and strengthened by the two Napoleons—the central government acquired a degree of power that is unknown in Britain. If this bureaucratic power enabled the daily administration of the country to run smoothly in spite of the ever changing ministries, it has been one of the reasons for the instability of the governments.

The Parliament was eternally suspicious of the ministers, who were called upon to account for matters which would be dealt with in England by the ordinary law courts. These attacks were called by the polite name of "interpellation", and if the ministers failed to give a satisfactory answer, they were expected by usage to resign *en bloc*. Various committees were set up to keep these gentlemen in check; they could not naturally belong to these committees, and their relations with the members who were known as *rapporteurs* were often rather strained.

Moreover, the Republican party was so huge that the Parliament broke up into a number of groups, which failed to develop into organized parties. They changed places often within the Chamber, the result being that no Cabinet could rely on a stable majority, but was always at the mercy of "shifting combinations." Add to this the fact that unlike the British Cabinet, a French ministry of the Third Republic was not empowered to dissolve Parliament, and it is easy to understand why the members of the Chamber could fling out ministry after ministry with complete impunity.

II

THE PRESS AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

ANY discussion of the press in France or elsewhere, must necessarily begin with the invention of printing. This great landmark in human progress, together with the liberating influence of the Renaissance, opened up such unlimited vistas of intellectual adventure, that those in power could not possibly tolerate such a serious threat to their age-old domination over the minds of men.

Even a liberal monarch like Francis I allowed Dolet, the heretical pamphleteer of Lyons, to be murdered; while ordinances passed in 1561 categorically stated that "printers and sellers of defamatory libels would be punished, the first time with whipping, the second time with death."

What the rulers meant by "defamatory libels" became amply clear when Louis XIV ascended the throne. Pascal's *Provinciales* was fed to the flames, Fénelon's *Télémaque* was reduced to pulp. The works of Voltaire, Diderot's *Lettres sur les Aveugles*, the treatise on the Mind by Hëlvetius, Raynal's *Histoire Philosophique des Deux Indes* were either destroyed or burnt.

In 1649, a printer named Lorens was sent to the galleys; a typographer and an assistant book binder were hanged in the company of an assistant book seller in the Place de Grève.

In 1689, a man named Chavigny who had taken refuge in Holland was lured back to France, arrested, taken to the Mont Saint-Michel and imprisoned in an iron cage, where he remained without respite for the next three decades.

It would be easy to multiply such monstrous facts, if a dreary repetition of man's inhumanity could serve any purpose. Even with the Revolution this tyranny continued, though freedom was granted for the first four years. War, the ceaseless intrigues of the émigrés and their friends made it impossible for this liberty to endure, and political necessities were quickly utilized by unscrupulous men to further their own ends. Recalcitrant journalists were often deported, and

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capital punishment was reserved by the Directoire, for those who attacked the authorities in the press.*

This was the greatest tragedy of the Revolution. The liberating forces which it generated were paralysed by the reactionaries, who triumphantly proclaimed that all this talk of popular rights was nothing but a sham.†

Both as Consul and as Emperor, Napoleon decided what papers should be published, and by the time he had finished his job, it appeared that for a city like Paris four papers were enough. Says Sisley Huddleston: "He considered the journalist to be fulfilling a public function, and this meant that he demanded docility. The censorship operated and expression of opinion was impossible. France was kept in ignorance of the tremendous European events unless they favoured Napoleon."

After the Restoration, successive governments and even the same government changed their attitude so often that it is tiring at times to keep up with their actions.

Freedom of speech was vaguely promised in the Charter of 1815, but it was impossible to decide whether the freedom of the press was included in its terms.

None the less, the law of 1819 officially announced the liberty of the periodical press, put an end to the censorship and admitted that any Frenchman was entitled to start a paper of his own. Offences committed in a paper were not to be tried by professional judges but, as in England, by a jury composed of ordinary citizens who would be more favourably inclined towards the journalistic delinquent.

But these excellent measures were largely nullified by the classic procedure of the privileged classes—to transform democracy into an expensive luxury reserved for the rich.

Every number of a paper had to be stamped, which meant of course a rise in the price. Moreover, a paper could be founded only after the payment of a heavy deposit, and as separate numbers were not sold, only people with money to

* "Juries naturally declined to convict and such extreme measures defeated themselves." — S. Huddleston.

† Notwithstanding all the repression, political articles became so popular after 1789, that no party or government could afford to ignore them.

pare could subscribe to a journal. As a result of these precautionary measures, all the papers put together did not have circulation of more than fifty-six thousand (forty-one thousand for the opposition) copies in 1824; and as time went on even "the intentions of the writer were taken into account."

In 1836, the press was revolutionised by Emile de Girardin—a prince among journalists. This is how he is described by one of his contemporaries, Arthur Meyer, editor of *Le Gaulois*:

"Emile de Girardin was our master in journalism: I have said this before, but shall never feel that I have done so often enough. As journalist he created the cheap press; as publisher he worked desperately hard to further the triumph of those liberal ideas to which he was devoted. He belonged to, and was really at the head of, those journalists who affirm that we must not be afraid of repeating the same idea, of writing the same article, day after day until the truths thus upheld have really penetrated the brain of the reader."

His paper, *La Presse*, accepted paid advertisements, printed in serial form the works of writers like Dumas and Balzac, published daily articles on military, naval, artistic, literary and commercial subjects.

He was a journalist who had learnt all the tricks of the trade. His contemporaries believed that he had collected in his portfolio a large number of pamphlets attacking his enemies which he would publish one day at a moment's notice. But when he died the "portfolio was opened with awe—and found to contain nothing but masses of newspaper cuttings. Girardin had hoodwinked his contemporaries and spread terror in his own characteristic fashion."*

More than any other single individual, Girardin had helped to transform the press into a dignified, recognized national institution. "If you look through a newspaper of 1860," says Meyer, "you will be surprised at not finding a single paragraph for gossip, whether dealing with town, the theatre, the fashionable world, dress, or racing."

Like his predecessor, Napoleon III began by completely destroying the liberty of the press. But by 1868, public discontent had reached such a pitch of intensity, that in order

* "Forty Years of Parisian Society"—Arthur Meyer.

to survive he was obliged to democratize his unpopular régime. In 1868, a simple declaration was enough to launch a paper, and the long suppressed journalists promptly resorted to the most violent attacks against the detested Emperor.

The liberty of the press was finally established under the Third Republic by the laws of 1875 and 1881. There were of course "laws of exception," but it was possible to attack "public personages from the President of the Republic to the most humble police agent, without fear of the consequences. Libel laws existed but they were seldom applied. Instead it is usual to have recourse to the right of response which is given to persons attacked in a journal."*

The more important papers usually supported the government, but there were scores of journals in which the most widely divergent views were expressed, from the *Action Française* of Maurras to the *L'Humanité* of Jaurès.

The press was naturally affected by the disintegration which characterised the public life of the country, in the years which preceded the war. But the journalists of the Resistance who risked their lives every day for five long years, by publishing clandestine papers and reviews—like the *Combat*, the *Franc-Tireur* and scores of others—have more than re-established the honour and prestige of their profession in France.

III

EDUCATION

A RESUME of the history of education in France takes us back to the days of Charlemagne when words like democracy, public liberties, the freedom of the individual were unknown in Europe.

This education of course was confined to the clergy and that in the northern and eastern parts of the Empire, so that the expression "Carlovingian Renaissance" seems slightly far-fetched to describe the situation.

Yet it was a beginning, the first of its kind after the destruction of Rome. Schools sprang up in abbeys and

* "France"—Sisley Huddleston.

churches where the priests were taught Latin and music; and as in the fourth century, grammar, rhetoric, the works of Christian authors, with a smattering of astronomy were the principal features of the ecclesiastical curriculum.

The 12th century saw a new and important educational revival. Abelard, famous as the hero of a tragic love story, held open-air classes in Paris, because no room was big enough to contain at one time the scores of pupils who wanted to listen to his illuminating lectures.

Guillaume de Champeaux was another famous scholar, and thanks to men like these, the schools of Paris had become the centre of intellectual Europe by the middle of the century.

All of them, clustering round the Church of Notre Dame, had to submit to the authority of the Bishop of Paris, till they became so numerous that those who worked in them were obliged to leave the island of the city. This emigration resulted in far-reaching changes: firstly, helped by the king they gradually got rid of the Bishop's authority; secondly, it made both teachers and pupils realize their common interests which ended in the formation of a powerful corporation--the University of Paris.

During the period of its glory from the 13th to the 15th centuries, two facts stand out in the history of the institution: its international character and its democratic organization.

Students from all over Europe flocked to the capital and were warmly welcomed. There were so many of them that the Faculty of Arts was split into "nations", each nation being composed of teachers and students who belonged to the same country.

These "nations" elected *procureurs* to look after their interests. After 1245, these *procureurs* were placed under the authority of the "rector" who was also elected for a short term of office. To begin with, he was only the head of the four nations comprising the Faculty of Arts, but his prestige and authority increased so rapidly that he soon became the chief of the University itself.

It is easy to see what a source of enlightenment such an organization could be. It did excellent work at a time when

couraged the new sciences and liberal research; while endless work was done in natural history till the outbreak of the Revolution, with Buffon in charge of the *Jardin des plantes*.

As the decisive crisis of the 18th century approached, it was inevitable that education should be influenced and transformed by the spirit of the times.

When Molière ridiculed the *Femmes Savantes* he was only catering to public prejudice, but even before the Revolution the question was taken up by important personages.

Madame de Maintenon founded the school of Saint-Cyr for the daughters of poor noblemen who were taught cooking, sewing, a little literature—all forced down with stiff doses of piety.

Fénélon, dealing with the same subject in his "Thesis on Education of Girls," displays a more liberal attitude than the royal favourite. "I respect the education of a good convert," he says, "but I count even more on that of a good heretic." Significant words indeed, when one recalls that the Jesuits were one of the pillars of the Church. He resents the fact that girls are barely educated. Although he sternly disapproves of music and "dangerous" books, he advocates the teaching of history and languages (particularly Latin), and, most important of all, demands that the special talents of each individual pupil should be treated with respect.

In sharp contrast to the dull moralizing of Rollin, Rousseau's *Emile*, published thirty-six years after the *Traité des Éducations*, made educational history. As one of the writers most profoundly influenced not only the revolutionary writers, but German intellectuals like Kant and Goethe, Herder and Lessing, it can hardly be possible to exaggerate its importance.

When *Emile* after having been nursed by his mother is old enough to be educated, his teacher tried to make him think and discover things for himself, instead of stuffing his mind with ready-made facts. Add to this the idea that girls should be independent, and the revolutionary potentialities of Rousseau's teaching become instantly obvious.

One year after the publication of *Emile*, La Chalotais, Procurer General of the Parliament of Rennes and enemy of

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the Jesuits, wrote a learned thesis on national education and as Rambaud points out, the idea that education should be "national" was in itself a revolution.

THE CONVENTION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Whatever the political crimes of the Convention, no impartial student can afford to deny its irrefutable achievement in the sphere of education.

Harassed by the Royalists in the Vendée, confronted by mighty coalitions of foreign powers which were bent on its destruction, the Convention found time to educate the new France which had just been created.

It introduced the metric system, founded the Natural History Museum, the *Polytechnique*, the *Ecole Normale* for the recruitment of teachers.

Inspired by Condorcet, it tried to educate the entire population. A number of secondary schools were to be opened and although the dead languages were not rejected, subjects like physics and chemistry, philosophy, history and mathematics brought the syllabus up to date.

It provided for a School of Oriental Languages, reorganized the Louvre, enormously expanded the *Bibliothèque du Roi* which became the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, re-arranged the National Archives, classified and passed measures for the preservation of monuments; it reformed the *Collège de France*, and also established in their modern form the Conservatoire, the Academies, the Institute of France.

The advent of Napoleon saw the foundation of the *Université Impériale*, centralizing all education with the Emperor as Grand Master. Napoleon who had a clear notion of the results he wanted, declared: "It was necessary for me to create a civil profession, disinterested, grave, which would work in the interests of letters and science. That is the idea of my University. Its members should not be subject to removal. Above all, I insist that it should devote itself to letters. I love the mathematical and physical sciences; algebra, chemistry, botany are excellent though partial applications of the human spirit; but letters are the human spirit itself. The

study of letters is the general education which prepares for everything; it is the education of the soul."*

His respect for learning was beyond all dispute. But he was intelligent enough to realize the propaganda value of schools and universities, and like all dictators he wanted to keep education under his control, particularly the education of future bourgeois citizens.

THE THIRD REPUBLIC

The Third Republic was fully alive to the necessity of education; this important question was no longer left in the hands of private and often incompetent individuals, and the knowledge to be given to both boys and girls was carefully planned.

The Republic had a formidable rival in the Church, which did everything it could to retain its authority over the minds of the young.

It suffered a heavy defeat, however, when it was decreed in 1882-1884 that primary education should be free, compulsory and entirely secular.

The history of the pre-war governments is filled with these disputes—both political and educational—between the State and the Church. It is likely that better relations will exist between these two important organizations, in the newly created Republic. The active and honourable rôle played in the Resistance by members of the clergy has entitled them to consideration; but it is to be hoped that in the matter of secularising education, the Fourth Republic will carry on the traditions of its predecessor.

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